

## HOWARD JACOBSON IS AUSCHWITZ A LAUGHING MATTER?

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## HUNTER DAVIES WHY MY DAUGHTER FACES JAIL IN AFRICA

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## JOHN WALSH FANCY FOOTWORK AND A MEAN LEFT HOOK

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# THE INDEPENDENT

Thursday 21 May 1998 45p (IR50p) No 3,616

## Nurses fly in to 'blood money' row

By Steve Boggan and Paul McCann

THE TWO nurses freed from a murder sentence in Saudi Arabia were due to arrive home today as one of their lawyers announced that he planned to secure them a £375,000 "blood money" bonus.

Lucille McLauchlan and Deborah Parry flew out of Dhahran last night on the first aircraft they could board. British embassy officials said they chose not to spend another night on Saudi soil after serving 18 months in prison for a crime they claim they did not commit.

Today, they will fly into controversy over six-figure amounts being paid by newspapers for their stories. The Press Complaints Commission has been asked to investigate payments to the women from the *Mirror* and the *Express*, even though they have been convicted of murder by the Saudi courts. Under the PCC's code of conduct, newspapers are barred from paying money to convicted criminals.

The women were freed by King Fahd on Tuesday, six months after Frank Gifford, brother of the murder victim, Australian nurse Yvonne Gifford, accepted £750,000 in blood money in return for waiving his right to demand the death penalty. Last night, Salah al-Hajjailan, the lawyer who negotiated the deal, said he had written to the nurses recommending that they contest half the money at a court hearing in Adelaide on 29 May.

"If they win, they should of-

fer the money back to the secret donors who gave it to them," he said. "If the donors don't want it back, then I think they should keep it for their own welfare." The donors are unlikely to risk the embarrassment of asking for the money back.

The two nurses had been in prison since Christmas Eve 1996, charged with murdering Ms Gifford, 55, who had been stabbed, battered and suffocated in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Centre in Dhahran. They were convicted on the strength of confessions which they say were

unrelenting physical and sexual abuse, and finally sentenced to a public flogging and years in jail. "If she was guilty of murder, would the Prime Minister have gone to such lengths to intervene and get her released?"

However, George Galloway, Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin, complained to the PCC. "I do not believe they should profit from this. It is quite grotesque," he said. "They have not been pardoned—they have been convicted of murder. Now the same newspapers who hounded Mary Bell and criticised the payment to her are paying out money to two convicted murderers."

Following the complaint from Mr Galloway, sources at the PCC let it be known that a public-interest defence may apply in this case.

Frank Gifford knew nothing yesterday of Mr Hejailan's recommendation to hold back half the blood money, which he prefers to call "compensation". He refused to comment at his home in Jamestown, outside Adelaide, but his wife, Laurel, said: "They have got off lightly—it is just incredible... they will have to live with their consciences for the rest of their lives."

For Ms McLauchlan, the threat of prison still loomed last night, in Scotland rather than Saudi Arabia. The Procurator Fiscal at Dundee yesterday obtained a warrant for her appearance at Dundee Sheriff Court on 18 June on charges of stealing a credit card and £1,740 from a terminally ill patient at a hospital in Dundee in 1996. She denied the charge.

**Inside**  
**Storm over cheque-book journalism, page 2**  
**Leading article, page 20**

extracted under the threat of physical and sexual abuse.

Last night, as Labour and Tory MPs called upon the PCC to intervene, Piers Morgan, editor of the *Mirror*, defended his newspaper's decision to pay for Ms McLauchlan's story.

"We have bought the rights to Lucille McLauchlan's story because we believe that she has been the victim of a gross miscarriage of justice," he said. "Her story is a sensational account of how a young woman was wrongfully framed for a crime she did not commit, beaten into a false confession during a week of



A catastrophic future in which protective clothing is needed to guard against lethal sun's rays is imagined in the dance 'Out on the Windy Beach', premiered by the Cholmondeleys and the Featherstonehaughs at Brighton Festival yesterday. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

## Trimble holds the key as Ulster wavers

By David McKitterick and Kim Sengupta

LARGE numbers of supporters of David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party have not yet decided how they are going to vote in tomorrow's referendum on the Good Friday agreement, according to a poll in a Dublin newspaper.

These undecided Unionists look set to have a decisive effect on the result of the poll. While almost all other voters in Ireland north and south have decided how to vote, more than 40 per cent of Mr Trimble's party is either unwilling or unable to give their views to opinion pollsters.

Their final decision is likely to determine whether the Yes lobby receives a convincing endorsement, or whether Unionism will be seen to be hopelessly split on Northern Ireland's future.

An opinion poll in the *Irish Independent* found 44 per cent of UUP supporters favouring the agreement, 14 per cent against and 41 per cent undecided.

Those in this undecided category were targeted yesterday by both Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, and William Hague, the leader of the Conservative Party, who flew to Northern Ireland to make a last-ditch attempt to increase the Yes vote. Mr Blair argued in a speech last night that Unionists had nothing to fear and everything to gain from the Good Friday agreement.

He has also issued a handwritten poster setting out a number of pledges which promise fairness and equality for all, that those who used or threatened vi-

olence would be excluded from government, and that prisoners would be kept in unless violence was given up for good.

Mr Trimble yesterday claimed the tide was turning in favour of the yes campaign, saying a yes vote would mean that Unionists could work with nationalists for the good of Northern Ireland. He added: "Together we can make this work. We could overcome our problems. We must have confidence in ourselves to face the future and no hide in the past. What future does the No campaign offer? No alternative, no achievement, no vision and no hope."

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, reinforced this message during a walkabout in Belfast with the Virgin chief, Richard Branson, who said he wanted to bring more business into Northern Ireland and predicted that peace will bring "an enormous amount of inward investment".

Yesterday, a group of former loyalist prisoners, Billy Mitchell, Tom Winston and James Tate appeared at a Yes campaign Press Conference to try and allay fears of fellow Protestants.

They claimed they had left behind the bitterness and rage of the past and were trying to put something back into the community.

Hidden support, page 6  
David Aaronovitch, page 21



## Exit left as Arts Council drama panel quit

By David Lister  
Arts News Editor

THE entire panel of drama advisers to the Arts Council resigned yesterday claiming the terms being introduced by new council chairman Gerry Robinson will be "unworkable".

The 16-strong drama panel consists of some of the biggest names in British theatre including West End producer Thea Holt, playwright Sir Alan Ayckbourn and directors Sam Mendes and Jude Kelly. "Their public disaffection will be a considerable embarrass-

ment to Gerry Robinson, who is also the chairman of Granada PLC, and has promised to streamline and modernise the body that gives over £400m a year in grant and lottery cash to the arts.

It also comes at a terrible time for Culture Secretary Chris Smith, overshadowing the launch of his book "Creative Britain" last night. The view of drama panel chairman Thea Holt was that far from being creative, Britain's arts were "now in the hands of businessmen and cost cutters".

Ms Holt, who chairs the

panel and was due to be in post until March 2000, said last night: "I'm very distressed that Chris Smith has not even acknowledged my resignation. I've had a very good relationship with him and I wrote to him a week ago telling him what I was doing, but he hasn't replied. Labour is my party. I've worked for it, but I did better under Virginia Bottomley."

"The drama panel has been castrated. The umbilical cord between the artist and the decision maker will no longer work under the changes Gerry Robinson has introduced. They

will lose all these names, hand-picked by me, but they don't care. Their view is we're expendable, we can be replaced."

Under a paper drawn up by Arts Council chief executive Peter Hewitt and chairman Gerry Robinson, the art form panels including the drama panel would meet only between twice and four times a year as opposed to 10 at present; it would not have a say in decisions about which theatres should receive National Lottery cash; it would offer advice to a council officer rather than the council itself; membership will

be regularly reviewed, and the panel chairman can sometimes accompany the art form director into council meetings.

"In other words," said Ms Holt, "I can carry my director's handbag. I don't buy this."

"Ironically, I was one of the architects of having a slimmed down council. But my intention was I and the others should resign when appropriate. What actually happened was I received a phone call when I'm in the bath in Tokyo telling me I've been sacked. I said 'oh, no I haven't'. Then I got a call from Gerry whom I hadn't even met saying

he agrees with everything I say, then he goes and castrates us. The Robinson reforms may suit Granada, but they don't suit me. They are all about finance and not artistic merit. So now I shall resign. My panel has met and they will be resigning too."

In a terse reaction last night Gerry Robinson said in a statement: "The Arts Council regrets that the chairman of its drama panel, Thea Holt, resigned from the council today. We are grateful to Thea for the contribution she has made to the council's work since her appointment in 1993."

## It could be you: £1m spin doctor wanted for Camelot

By Paul McCann  
Media Editor

CAMELOT is looking for a £1m "super-spin-doctor" to help it win a renewal of its licence to operate the lottery following a series of public relations disasters.

It has shortlisted two candidates for the job of communications director, believed to be people with high-level government contacts. Charles Anson, former secretary to the Queen, is rumoured to be one of those being considered. The successful candidate will be paid a £500,000 bonus if he or she helps Camelot renew the li-

cence. This will be on top of a £250,000 salary in the run-up to the new licence, beginning in 2001.

The salary will raise eyebrows. The last communications director, David Rigg, left last year after it was disclosed he received a £249,000 bonus, which amounted to a 90-per-cent pay rise. He carried the can for the "fat-cat" PR disaster in August, when all 10 Camelot directors were found to be sharing a £2.3m bonus pay-out.

Yesterday Camelot sources admitted it has a big image problem: "We've had to be realistic about what we can expect from someone. Naively in the

past, we've wanted people to like us. I think now we're resigned to having the public just dislike us a little less. It's a bit like being traffic wardens."

After the fat-cat scandal, Camelot's image was dented by the Guy Snowden affair. Mr Snowden, American head of the Camelot founding shareholder G-Tech, lost £100,000 in a libel case against Richard Branson. Mr Branson said he offered him a bribe not to make a profit-free bid for the lottery.

The case forced the lottery regulator, Peter Davis, who awarded Camelot the licence, to step down. Mr Snowden and G-Tech sold its 22-per-cent

shareholding in Camelot, but it still supplies the operator with technology.

The Government has amended its lotteries Bill so that the next licence will be awarded by a committee of five appointees rather than the regulator. But the new spin-doctor's chances of picking up his or her bonus looked better last week after a subtle change in government policy. Labour's election manifesto pledged the Government to seek "an efficient, not-for-profit operator". However, last week the Government defeated an opposition amendment that tied it in to just such an operator.

### Today's news

#### DPP to quit

DAME Barbara Mills yesterday announced her early departure as Director of Public Prosecutions ahead of publication of an official report which is expected to be highly critical of her six years in the job. Page 2

#### Asylum victory

THE Home Office has accepted that two East European gypsies who were condemned as bogus refugees were genuine asylum-seekers. Their successful application is to be used by lawyers as a test case for hundreds of similar asylum claims. Page 5

## STOP making OBSCENE phone CALLS

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Former communications director David Rigg was paid a £249,000 bonus

**TOMORROW**

**■ Deborah Ross on the campaign trail with Ian Paisley**

**■ World Music: Your complete guide to every World Cup song**

**■ When moguls collide: Redford and Beatty do battle at the box office**



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Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the new material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

MPs call for Press Complaints Commission investigation into cheque-book journalism

# Tabloids fight over freed nurses' story

By Paul McGann and Steve Boggan

**FREED** nurses Lucille McLaughlan and Deborah Parry entered a gathering storm about cheque-book journalism this morning after it emerged that they are likely to be paid six-figure sums for their stories.

MPs last night called on the Press Complaints Commission to investigate on the grounds that its Code of Practice outlaws payments to people convicted of a crime. The two nurses remain convicted murderers under Saudi Arabian law.

The newspapers involved, the *Mirror*, which has paid for Ms McLaughlan's story, and the *Express*, which has signed up Ms Parry, came top in a frenzied bidding war that involved newspapers and television stations from home and abroad.

The *Mirror* and its Scottish sister paper the *Daily Record* were keen to get Ms McLaughlan's story, because of her Dundee roots. The *Express* refused to comment on its deal with Ms Parry.

The BBC has produced a special edition of *Panorama* based on the prison diaries of one of the nurses that will be broadcast tonight. The corporation maintains it did not pay for the nurses' stories.

George Galloway MP, wrote to the PCC last night asking them to intervene to stop the payments: "Criminals are not supposed to profit from their crimes," he said.

"Wasn't this the argument used by the very same newspapers to justify their witch hunting of convicted killer Mary Bell?"

The MP said in his letter to the PCC: "It is greatly to the credit of Robin Cook and the British Foreign Office that King Fahd has commuted their sentences after just 18 months.



Lucille McLaughlan (above) and Deborah Parry



stand there is also a discussion about a film contract - is deeply distressing and must court criticism in Saudi Arabia of the King's leniency.

Mr Galloway was joined in his criticism by Labour backbencher Claire Ward, a member of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the media, who said that the nurses should just be grateful that they had been released from a Saudi jail.

Guy Black, director of the Press Complaints Commission said it would investigate whether a pardon under Saudi law meant that the nurses' conviction was wiped clean - therefore allowing newspapers to pay them.

Clause 16 of the PCC's code forbids newspapers from making payments to convicted criminals unless the newspaper can prove a public interest for doing so. Following the complaint from Mr Galloway,

sources at the PCC let it be known that the public interest defence may be applied in this case.

Conservative Roger Gale, a former BBC journalist, said: "I am not in favour of cheque-book journalism - who is going to challenge their stories?"

"If they are innocent, then their story should be told in book form, not the lurid tabloid sensationalism we can expect from newspapers who, only weeks ago, were complaining about payments to Mary Bell."

A spokesman for the British Embassy in Riyadh said the pardon did not clear the women's reputations and was not a sign of innocence. "Technically, the King has simply commuted the sentence to the same period that they have already served," he said. Asked if it cleared their names, he replied: "No."

The women's lawyer in Saudi Arabia, Salah al-Hajjailan, said: "Perhaps a better word than 'pardon' would be 'clemency'. This does not mean the women have been found innocent of the crime."

But Laurel Gilford, wife of Yvonne Gilford's brother, Frank, yesterday reacted angrily to the news. "They've got off lightly. It's just incredible," Mr Gilford said from his home in Jamestown, in south Australia.

"They'll have to live with their consciences for the rest of their lives. It's just maddening that they've got off, but nothing we can bring back Yvonne."

Piers Morgan, editor of the *Mirror* said: "I don't think we need to defend our ethical and moral position... The most compelling evidence of their innocence is: do we honestly believe they would have been pardoned, and gained the personal support of the Prime Minister of this country if people genuinely felt they were guilty of murder? I don't believe they would."



Frank Gilford, brother of murdered Yvonne Gilford: "They've got off lightly. It's just incredible"

# DPP to leave early for sake of successor

By Ian Burrell  
Home Affairs Correspondent

**DAME** Barbara Mills yesterday announced her early departure as Director of Public Prosecutions ahead of publication of an official report which is expected to be highly critical of her six years in the job.

The report, by former Appeal Court judge, Sir Iain Glidwell, was delivered to the Attorney-General, John Morris, on Monday, and is understood to call for wide-ranging reforms of the Crown Prosecution Service, which Dame Barbara heads.

Dame Barbara, 57, said the reason for her decision to leave early was that she wished her successor to be in place in time for the major reorganisation of the CPS being planned by the Government. "It is important that a new management structure should be put in place by the team who will see it through," she said.

The Attorney General accepted her decision and praised the DPP for her "strong and positive leadership" of the CPS.

While in opposition, senior Labour figures mounted a forceful campaign against the CPS. The Glidwell inquiry was ordered within weeks of Labour taking office.

Dame Barbara has also come under pressure to resign over the failure to prosecute police officers implicated in the deaths of two men in custody. Retired judge, Gerald Butler, has completed a report into those decisions - which were later quashed in the High Court - but the CPS has declined to publish it ahead of impending court action.

The 11-month Glidwell inquiry, which comes against a background of falling numbers of prosecutions, is said to have concluded that the rigid organisation of the CPS, with its headquarters in London and 13 regional offices, has created extra paperwork for lawyers and reduced efficiency. The report is expected to highlight a series of management shortcomings and low morale.

Yesterday, the Government closed ranks in support of Dame Barbara and the Prime Minister's official spokesman said Tony Blair said she had done "an extremely good job and... her contribution as DPP will be remembered warmly".

But her departure was well-received in many areas of the police service. Sergeant Mike Bennett, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, who once dubbed the CPS "Criminal Protection Society", welcomed the news.

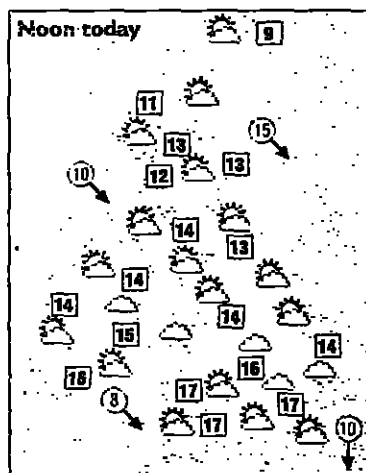
"I'm pleased she's gone - she should have gone a long time ago," he said. "She would never listen to her critics."

John Burnett, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on Legal Affairs suggested Dame Barbara's departure was linked to Glidwell and called for a major overhaul of the CPS. "The public deserve more than a head on a plate," he said.

In a statement issued yesterday Dame Barbara said she had been "very proud" of her role and paid tribute to her staff and management team. "The process of change is not at an end," she said.

The Government wants the CPS reorganised along Police Force lines into 42 areas, each with a Chief Crown Prosecutor.

## WEATHER



Scotland will have a cool day with sunny spells. It will also be cooler than late across England. Wales and Northern Ireland will have more in the way of cloud, but southern counties adjacent to the Channel and south-west England will still turn out reasonably warm. Skies will be cloudy at times in places, with the risk of a little light rain breaking out in central and eastern England and Wales, but this is not expected to amount to much anywhere.

**Outlook for the next few days**  
Northern Scotland is at risk of seeing some light rain or drizzle but elsewhere in the UK will be dry on Friday and Saturday. Everywhere will be a little cooler than of late but temperatures will generally still rise to slightly better than the average for the time of the year. Sunday will become unsettled from the north with rain, but the south will remain mostly dry until Monday with it turning colder as the rain arrives.

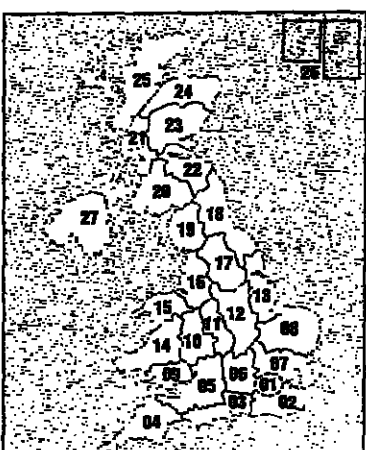
**British Isles weather**  
most recent available figures at noon local time  
C: cloudy; D: drizzle; F: fog; H: high; L: low; M: mist; R: rain; S: sunny; St: strong; Sh: showers; Ss: snow; Th: thunder; W: wind

Aburdeen	R 9.48	Glasgow	S 20.68
Aberdeen	R 9.48	Inverness	S 12.54
Ayr	R 15.59	Isle of Skye	S 18.64
Belfast	C 18.64	Jersey	S 21.70
Birmingham	F 20.68	Liverpool	S 18.64
Blackpool	F 15.59	London	S 23.73
Bournemouth	S 23.73	Manchester	F 21.70
Brighton	S 20.68	Newcastle	C 11.52
Bristol	S 23.73	Oxford	F 21.70
Cardiff	S 18.64	Plymouth	S 20.68
Cardigan	R 16.61	Scarborough	F 15.59
Exeter	C 21.70	Southampton	F 24.73
Edinburgh	R 11.52	Southend	M 16.61
Exeter	S 19.66	Stamford	Sh 9.48
Glasgow	C 15.59	York	C 17.63

**Air quality**  
Yesterday's readings

London	Good
S. England	Good
W. England	Good
C. England	Good
N. England	Good
Scotland	Good
N. Ireland	Good

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High tides	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	10:18	6.3	22:40	6.2
Liverpool	07:40	8.2	20:24	8.2
Liverpool	02:17	11.0	15:54	11.1
Hull (Albert Dock)	02:45	7.5	14:58	7.6
Greenock	08:58	3.0	21:33	3.0
Dun Laoghaire	08:12	3.7	21:05	3.7

**Lighting-up times**

Belfast	21:33	to	05:07
Birmingham	21:06	to	05:02
Bristol	21:30	to	05:10
Cardiff	21:30	to	05:05
Cardigan	20:54	to	05:00
London	21:12	to	04:58
Newcastle	21:17	to	04:48

**World weather** most recent available figures at noon local time

Algeria	C 23.73	Buenos Aires	C 19.66	Manila	F 23.73
Algeria	C 23.73	Calcutta	S 29.82	Medan	S 27.79
Algeria	C 23.73	Calcutta	S 29.82	Medan	S 27.79
Algeria	C 23.73	Calcutta	S 29.82	Medan	S 27.79
Algeria	C 23.73	Calcutta	S 29.82	Medan	S 27.79



**Atlantic chart, noon today**

High L is slow moving and intensifying. Low C will move into the West Indies and dissipate.
---

## MICHAEL HANLON WEATHER WISE

MAY has been a pretty good month so far, if you enjoy warm, dry and sunny weather. On the 13th, Southampton, Hampshire, recorded 29C, the highest temperature seen so far this year anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Clear skies, temperatures in southern England generally into the 20s, and very little rainfall - these conditions are the result of a persistent high pressure system over the British Isles, bringing in light southerly winds.

Hot and sunny Mays are not unusual in Britain. We tend to assume that July and August are the most reliable months for summer weather (and plan our holidays accordingly) but, in fact, both months - and August especially - are characterised by warm but damp air brought in by Atlantic depressions. August is often a terrible month, rivaling December for wetness and frequently being no warmer than April or October. But, ever optimistic, we trek off en masse to the seaside with bucket, spade and sun-tan oil, when what we'll really need is wellies and a sou'wester.

May, in contrast, often sets in fair, as high pressure dominates following the April storms, bringing quiet weather, high temperatures (in the day - May nights can be chilly) and very little rain.

And the trend towards warm Mays could become more marked. In the past 10 years, six Mays have had unusually hot and dry weather over a significant proportion of the country. In 1989, an exceptionally warm May (and a blazing summer) followed a cold and snowy April (but an extremely mild winter), a fairly common pattern that seems to be repeating itself this year.

Only in 1996, during the past decade, have May temperatures been significantly below average.

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**DELL**



The three priceless works of art on the right were snatched in a raid on a gallery in Rome, it was revealed yesterday. They are the latest additions to a hoard of treasures, stolen to order and never to be seen again...



Stolen: L'Arlesienne by Vincent van Gogh, Le Cabanon de Jourdan by Paul Cezanne and Le Jardinier, also by Van Gogh

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AGS, BRIDGMAN AND POPPERFOTO

## When did you last see these paintings?



**Missing** The Concert by Jan Vermeer - stolen in 1990 from a museum in Massachusetts; priceless



**Missing** The White Duck by Jean-Baptiste Oudry - stolen 1992 from an estate in Norfolk; value £5m



**Missing** Storm on the Sea of Galilee by Rembrandt - stolen at same time as The Concert; priceless



**Missing** Sibylle von Cleve by Lucas Cranach the Younger, stolen from a castle in Baden, Germany, 1995



**Missing** Still Life by Georges Braque, a contemporary of Picasso, stolen from a Stockholm museum



**Missing** Shade and Darkness - Evening of the Deluge, by Turner, stolen from Frankfurt 1994; £10m



**Missing** Portrait of a Lady by Gustav Klimt - stolen from Piacenza in Italy, 1997



**Missing** Turner's Light and colour - the Morning After The Deluge, also stolen 1994 from Frankfurt; £10m



**Missing** Adoration by Caravaggio - stolen in 1969, suspected to have been used as collateral by the Mafia



**Missing** Nebelschwaden by Caspar David Friedrich - taken from Frankfurt museum, 1994; £1m

By Clare Garner and Ann Hanley in Rome

TWO VAN GOGHS and a painting by Cezanne have been stolen from a gallery in Rome in the latest in a series of robberies which illustrates how art theft has become one of the most lucrative global criminal activities.

The National Gallery of Modern Art's skeleton night staff of three were left bound, gagged and unable to call the police who arrived on the scene hours after the robbers had made their getaway on Tuesday night with the three priceless paintings.

In the first armed robbery in

an Italian museum since 1992, wardens were forced at gunpoint to deactivate the gallery's alarm system as the three thieves removed *Le Jardinier* and *L'Arlesienne* by Van Gogh, and Cezanne's *Le Cabanon de Jourdan*. These masterpieces will be added to the Art Loss Register's list of works of stolen art - currently worth more than £1bn.

"These works are so valuable, and so well-known, that they cannot be sold; at least, not on the normal market," said General Roberto Conforti, the head of the police art-theft squad.

So, if these paintings are too celebrated to be sold on the open market, why steal them? According to Charles Hill, for-

mer head of Scotland Yard's arts and antiques squad and now a member of Nordstern, a leading art insurance group, the answer lies in the psychology of the thief. "They steal to fashion, not to order," he said. "It's a cachet crime committed by greedy thieves looking for a high-profile crime to make their name. It's a really dumb crime stealing a masterpiece - because you can't sell them on."

Mr Hill cited as an example Peter Scott, once known as "the human fly" as a result of his spectacular career as a cat burglar, who was jailed on Tuesday for his part in a plot to sell a stolen £750,000 Picasso painting. The officer who led the po-

lice operation said he believed Scott "revelled in infamy".

In such cases, it is not uncommon for a ransom to be offered after the theft. Yesterday afternoon, police in Rome were investigating an anonymous phone call to an Italian news agency, in which a man said that a ransom demand for the return of the paintings would be made soon. He said this would include "political demands". Once such a call has been made, the chances of recovering the work of art improve.

Cultural heritage minister Walter Veltroni promised "utmost commitment" to recovering the stolen works, and pointed out that the use of

weapons in art thefts in Italy was almost unknown. "This is a qualitative leap," he said. Mr Veltroni defended Italy's recent record on protecting its vast cultural heritage, reporting that art thefts were down 40 per cent in the first months of 1998, and that around 50 per cent of all stolen art works are recovered.

Gallery spokeswoman Elena di Majo had a different theory about the motive for theft, pointing to the fact that the paintings were stolen from a room containing works by major 19th-century artists, including Degas, Monet, Courbet and Klimt. "The robbers left behind a lot of great paintings worth just as much, if not more than the

ones that were stolen," she said. "It looks very much like they were acting on commission."

Experts differ in their opinions of whether such paintings are destined for a private collector after being stolen to order. The popular image of Ian Fleming's *Dr No*, who has art stolen to order and preserved for his private viewing, is dismissed as myth by Mr Hill. But others, such as Colin Norville-Read of *Trace* magazine, which publicises stolen art and antique treasures, maintain that *Dr No* characters who revel in their secret hoards of stolen *objets d'art* do exist.

"Some collectors are quite obsessed about a particular

piece and go to any lengths to actually get hold of it," said Mr Norville-Read. "It will just be that when they walk into their secret room with their collection of Lowrys or whatever, they get a lot of pleasure out of looking at the collection."

Thefts of instantly recognisable works such as the Van Goghs and Cezanne stolen on Tuesday night only occur about three times a year worldwide. While such paintings tend to remain hidden, the majority of art booty is regarded as international currency, employed as collateral in underworld deals or handed over to banks unaware of the paintings' provenance in return for loans.

"Commission theft does happen," said Caroline Wakeford, operations manager at the Art Loss Register, "but there's a much more sinister reason. The art is usually used as collateral in crime linked with drugs and arms dealing. It's like a loan note." Caravaggio's *Adoration*, stolen in 1969 and unrecovered, is said to have passed between mafia bosses as collateral.

Among the missing works or art recorded on the Art Loss Register in London are 349 Picassos, 250 works by Marc Chagall and 175 by Salvador Dali. The register keeps an eye on what is put on sale at auction houses and checks them against items reported as missing.

## Puttnam tipped for top BBC post

By Janine Gibson  
Media Correspondent

NEW LABOUR peer and elder statesman of the British film industry Lord Puttnam has been shortlisted to be the next deputy chairman of the BBC.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is considering applications for the post, which was advertised in March and falls vacant in July when the current deputy, Lord Cox, leaves the board of governors.

A spokeswoman said the depart-

ment hopes to make an announcement soon. She refused to comment on names being considered.

Sources suggest, however, that Lord Puttnam is the favoured candidate in a shortlist of five drawn up from more than 400 applicants.

Lord Puttnam yesterday confirmed he had applied for the job, saying: "I have thrown my hat into the ring... It's a fantastically important job."

In a first for the BBC, current chairman Sir Christopher Bland is involved in the recruitment process for the man or woman who might be-

come his successor. The identities of the rest of the appointment panel, selected by the DCMS, are secret.

Lord Puttnam, producer of the Oscar-laden film *Chariots of Fire*, was tipped to be appointed as BBC deputy chairman following his support for New Labour during the last election and his work at the helm of the task force for the arts and culture industries. When the post was advertised, however, reports suggested he was no longer in the running.

Earlier this year Culture Secretary Chris Smith appointed Granada Group chairman Gerry Robinson



Puttnam leads shortlist of five

chairman of the Arts Council. He also appointed lawyer Vanni Treves as chairman of Channel 4 and EMI chairman Colin Southgate as chairman of the Royal Opera House.

## Cheaper electrical goods on way

By Nigel Cope

CHEAPER electrical goods could be on the way after the Government yesterday moved to ban recommended retail prices on items such as televisions, hi-fi, video recorders and washing machines.

The new regime, due to take effect from 1 September, will make it illegal for suppliers to set recommended prices for retailers. It also bans suppliers from discriminating either by price or by terms and conditions against retailers which sell at a discount.

The measures follow recommendations from Britain's competition watchdog, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, published in July last year.

"I am determined that price competition in these practices which restrict competition should be stopped," Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, said in a statement.

The move was welcomed by the Consumers' Association which said it was "staggering" that electrical products currently cost exactly the same whether they are bought in the

Cornwall or Cumbria. It said smaller, independent shops sometimes offered electrical goods at lower prices than the big chains. "A Panasonic TV which costs £529.99 across the country could be bought from a small shop in Windsor for £479.99," the association said.

However, Dixons said consumers would notice little difference. "Electricals retailing is already highly competitive and consumers have benefited from that," a spokesman said. Dixons has always maintained that it does not use the recommended retail prices.

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# Stars pay their emotional farewells to Sinatra

By Andrew Marshall

A VERITABLE galaxy of the show business establishment came from across America to say goodbye. They came to pay their respects to a man who sang songs for swinging lovers, but also for the lonely. "We all fell in love, fell out of love, and fell in love again to the sound of his voice," Tony Bennett told more than 400 mourners.

The stars had gathered with the family for an emotional vigil on the eve of Frank Sinatra's funeral. It was a private ceremony at the Good Shepherd Catholic church in Beverly Hills, where the singer's gardenia-covered coffin was gently placed by pall bearers including the comedian Tom Dreesen, who opened for Sinatra for years. "It was just really difficult, emotional," said Dreesen. "It was good moments, moments of love."

Sinatra could not have hoped for a better turnout among friends, colleagues and co-stars. Among those attend-



A Who's Who of American entertainment paid their last respects to Frank Sinatra yesterday, including (from left): Faye Dunaway, Liza Minnelli and Jack Lemmon

ing were Liza Minnelli, Gregory Peck, Kirk Douglas, Robert Wagner, Shelley Winters, Wayne Newton, Milton Berle, Angie Dickinson, Anthony

Quinn and Jack Lemmon, the standard-bearers of a classic age of American entertainment. Sinatra's daughter Nancy and grand-daughter Amanda spoke,

as did Bennett. Sinatra's songs were played and a choir sang. Sinatra's death has produced a great outpouring of emotion in America, despite - and to

some extent because of - the fact that he was a far from perfect human being. "He didn't have a perfect life... he did have struggles, and he did have

trials and he did have difficulties and he had setbacks just like all people do, and yet he had vision and was able to see beyond that," said Cardinal Roger

Mahony, the archbishop of Los Angeles.

Sinatra died of a heart attack last Thursday, at the age of 82. He had long fought his illness,

but his last words, according to the family, were: "I'm losing." As his friends gathered, Sinatra's widow Barbara was comforted by her son, Robert Marx.

After the vigil came the funeral service. The body was buried in a family plot at Desert Memorial Park in Cathedral City, near Palm Springs. Sinatra's mother, Natalie, and father, Anthony Martin Sinatra, are buried there. Because Sinatra had been awarded the Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal, his body was escorted by a military honour guard.

The singer left multi-million dollar homes to his fourth wife and widow, Barbara, and "very substantial assets" to his three children, a lawyer said. Barbara Sinatra will inherit mansions in Beverly Hills and Malibu while Frank Jr will receive the rights to his father's sheet music. Daughters Nancy and Tina will receive holdings under a "living trust" created 15 years ago. His fortune has been estimated at \$200m (£126m); the will is made public today.



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## IN BRIEF

### Fred West's cousin jailed for string of sex attacks

A COUSIN of Cromwell Street killer Fred West was yesterday jailed for four years for a string of sex attacks on three teenage girls.

William John Hill, 45, was convicted at Birmingham Crown Court on one count of rape and three counts of indecent assault against three schoolgirls.

The court heard that Hill, who has three children, had visited Fred West's home at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, frequently until he married in 1985. He raped one girl and indecently assaulted girls after they visited his village home in Much Marcle, Herefordshire, between 1976 and 1984.

Hill was cleared of rape and indecent assault of a fourth girl.

### Drink-drive judge banned

A FORMER judge who admitted driving while over three times the drink-drive limit was yesterday disqualified for 30 months.

John Aspinall QC, 50, resigned as a recorder after the offence in April and could face a Bar Council disciplinary hearing. He pleaded guilty to driving with excess alcohol on the A350 near his home in Spetisbury, Dorset, on 10 April.

Aspinall was also fined £1,800 by magistrates in Blandford. Magistrate Anthony Jaggard told Aspinall that his ban could be reduced by six months if he completed a driver rehabilitation course by 30 March 2000.

### Channel 5 viewers double

IN ITS first year on air, Channel 5's share of viewing has increased by more than 50 per cent, but is still only four per cent of total television viewing, writes Janine Gibson, Media Correspondent.

Since its March 1997 launch, Channel 5 has successfully increased its capacity through new transmitters and satellite broadcast. Last weekend, a special about the Titanic achieved its highest-ever Sunday share of viewing, with 5.1 per cent.

### Runaway lorry 'not faulty'

THE owners of the M1 runaway truck that sparked off a major police operation said they had found nothing wrong with it. Michael Rayner, 26, survived a 20-mile ordeal last week after saying the accelerator pedal had jammed. But yesterday the Kent-based Polkacrest company said it had found "no reason for concern with either the truck or ancillary equipment".

### Fayed buys Diana's old school

MOHAMED AL FAYED is to buy the old school of Diana, Princess of Wales, for £2.5 million, to create a school for traumatised children.

The Harrods chairman said the new centre at West Heath School in Sevenoaks, Kent, would be "a living memorial to Princess Diana and Dodi Al Fayed".

### Breastfeeding rebels meet

ADVOCATES of breastfeeding who formed a breakaway group from the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) are holding their first major conference today. The Breastfeeding Network broke away from the NCT over its acceptance of sponsorship from Sainsbury, which sells an own-brand breast-milk substitute.

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# Plight of the gypsies Britain branded as scroungers

'Bogus' refugees have won a victory that may benefit hundreds, writes Ian Burrell

THEY were dubbed "Giro Czechs". Michal and Mariana Balog were part of the migration of eastern European gypsies to Britain last year which ministers depicted as an exodus of bogus refugees intent on milking our benefit system.

Now the Home Office has accepted that the Balogs were not bogus after all but were genuinely fleeing racial persecution after being the victims of at least eight attacks by skinhead gangs in the Slovak Republic.

Their successful application for asylum is, along with three other favourable verdicts for Slovak "Roma" families, to be used by lawyers as a test case for hundreds of similar asylum claims.

The issue is potentially embarrassing for ministers who denounced the gypsies as "economic migrants".

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, told radio listeners in January: "Not ... one of these has been found by the independent tribunals to have had a well-founded claim for asylum." He accused solicitors of helping gypsies to "manufacture, invent [and] pursue" claims.

But a special adjudicator at the Immigration Appellate Authority has ruled in favour of eight Czech and Slovak gypsies, who had claimed they were being persecuted. The Home Office, which had earlier described the cases as "manifestly unfounded", has decided not to appeal the decisions.

As critics of the gypsies will have suspected, Mr Balog, 28, has never done a full day's work in his life.

On the only occasion he was offered a position - at a Slovakian brewery - he was forced to leave on his first day after colleagues refused to work with a gypsy.

Other firms refused even to consider someone of his racial

background and his job centre openly admitted there was no point in him coming in.

Instead he was forced to root around in rubbish dumps for bottles, paper and iron to sell.

Apart from the physical attacks, one of which left youngest daughter Valeria unable to speak for weeks afterwards, the family was constantly taunted with shouts of "Go Back to India". The Roma are described by other Slovaks as "blacks" and refer to themselves as such, despite their skin colour.

When Mariana, 27, was expecting elder daughter Marika, now five, she was told by her local hospital that they did not accept Roma. After protest she was allowed to have her baby in a side room used to house the building's heating controls.

By last year the family were unable to afford their rent and were moved into an out-of-town housing scheme reserved for gypsies. In August, they fled to Britain on a bus. Immigration officials considered their case for asylum and rejected it in November.

But the family, who are living in a two-bedroomed first-floor flat in Muswell Hill, north London, this month won their appeal.

Although none of the family speaks English, Mr Balog said he would accept any kind of work, while his wife is seeking employment as a seamstress. Marika has already started attending a local school.

The family has some contact with the other Roma families, although many are housed in Kent after arriving at Dover. The gypsies organised a dance evening at Swiss Cottage, north London, last weekend.

Through an interpreter, Mr Balog said: "No one should have to live through what we have lived through. The Home Office don't seem to have any idea

what is going on in our country." He is grateful to the British public. "People are so polite. If we go shopping people help us, whereas in Slovakia we are not even allowed into many of the shops."

Deri Hughes-Roberts, of the Refugee Legal Centre, said the favourable verdicts would be test cases for the 370 Roma still appealing for asylum in Britain. Another 523 Czech and Slovak refugees have al-

ready been removed from Britain.

Mr Hughes-Roberts said: "If the Home Office chooses to ignore the decisions in the test cases, we will be arguing before special adjudicators that the de-

cision has to be treated as being extremely persuasive and that they should allow the outstanding appeals."

A Home Office spokesman said the fact that eight appellants had been successful

showed that the adjudications were fair and independent.

He pointed out that since the beginning of December, 24 Slovaks and 12 Czechs have had asylum appeals dismissed.

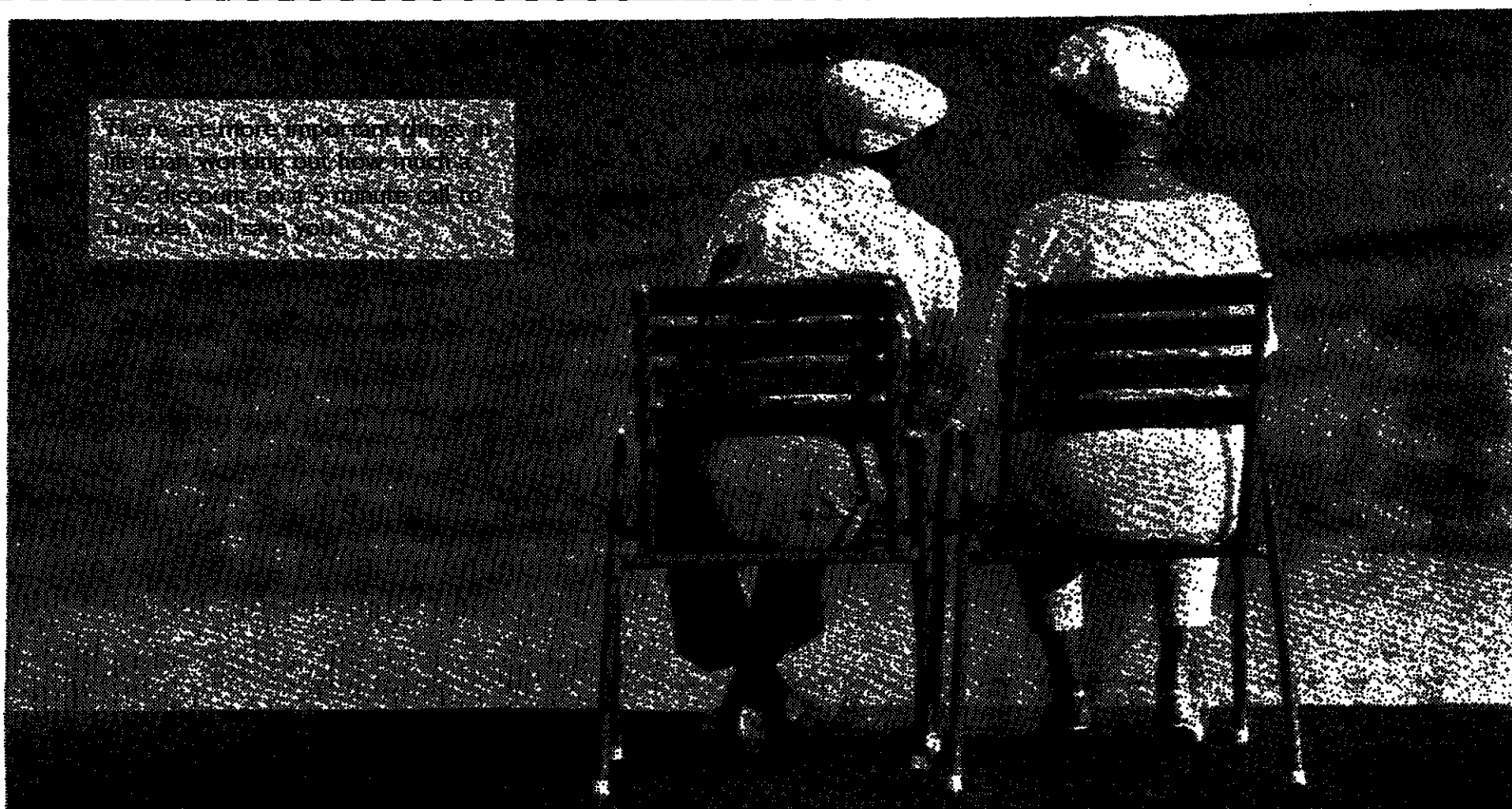
"Each case will continue to

be considered on its individual merits, in the light of all available information about the treatment of Roma in the applicant's country of origin. If asylum is justified this will be granted," he said.



The Balog family, now living in north London, were subject to attacks by skinheads, hounded out of jobs and refused medical treatment at home

Photograph: Paul Rogers



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## Wife tells of fondling by army chaplain

By Linus Gregoriadis

AN ARMY chaplain fondled a soldier's wife as she sat on a sofa holding a friend's baby, a court martial was told yesterday.

Captain Richard Landall, 41, also pressed himself against her as she bathed three children, and molested her when she had a child sitting on her knee, a 24-year-old woman told the court.

Describing the first of a series of alleged assaults, the woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said: "The padre made general chat about nothing in particular and then he put his arm around me. He did not say anything."

"His hand went inside my sweater ... his hand was underneath my crop-top. She continued: "I rushed out saying I was going to change the baby to get myself away from him."

The following day Capt Landall, a Bosnia veteran, called at the woman's house with a bunch of flowers and a card, the court martial, at Tidworth, Wiltshire, heard. It read: "Thank you for being there for me. Sorry about my behaviour last night. Too much to drink."

Capt Landall, Chaplain to the 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, denies four charges of indecently assaulting the woman and an alternative charge of harassing her. The alleged assaults are said to have taken place over a five-day period in No-



Captain Landall, who denies a series of assaults

vember last year, at Celle, Germany.

Describing another assault, the woman told the court that Capt Landall indecently assaulted her as she bathed three children at her friend's house, and on another occasion while she had a child on her knee.

Cross-examined by Alison Barker, counsel for the defence, the woman denied that she had been drinking heavily before one of the alleged assaults and had sat on the chaplain's lap before kissing the bald patch on his head. The defence accused her of lying with her "scandalous" allegations in a bid to save her failing marriage and to win sympathy.

The hearing continues.

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Peace referendum: Backing for deal difficult to gauge, because voting system does not differentiate between Catholics and Protestants

## Ulster poll hides level of loyalist support

By Kim Sengupta

THE crucial question of just what kind of mandate the Northern Ireland peace agreement has will be virtually impossible to answer, because of the system of polling in tomorrow's referendum.

It does not differentiate between voting patterns of Protestants and Catholics and it will be difficult to gauge the exact level of Unionist support. The split between supporters of Ian Paisley and David Trimble is likely to have an important influence on whether a Northern Ireland assembly can work effectively. The votes cast by an electorate of 1.8 million will be counted on the basis of Yes or No, without any details emerging of whether they are Unionist or nationalist, or from Protestant or Catholic areas.

It is generally accepted Unionists make up 52 per cent of the Northern Ireland electorate. The No campaign has claimed that a rejection of the peace agreement by more than 26 per cent of the overall vote will mean more than half the Unionists are against it and it does not have their consent.

The Yes campaign started by striving to get 70 or 75 per cent of the vote across the board to counter allegations that the accord has been backed not just by Catholics, who are expected to be in favour, but Protestants as well.

The poll will also present some unique imponderables. The most obvious is that a high turn-out is expected, with many electors, mainly Protestant, voting for the first time. Such an influx can lead to a variable of

10 per cent in the result. This, say observers, will muddy the waters even more, leading competing camps to make claims and counter-claims on whether loyalists supported the agreement.

One way of discovering differences in voting between the communities would be through exit polls. But there is no history of such polling in Northern Ireland. There is another complicating factor: opinion polls have shown around 25 per cent say they are undecided. But, with the referendum a day away, most of these may have made up their minds and are keeping their intentions to themselves. If they show similar ambivalence to exit pollsters, any predictions would be less than reliable.

Ballot-boxes will be sealed twice after voting. The No campaign wants to put its seal on them because, according to Mr Paisley, the Government has "stooped to every dirty trick in the book ... we're even going to sit and watch them all night to make sure there is no nonsense."

The result will be declared on Saturday afternoon.

Three of the parties are planning to lodge formal complaints following allegations that many people have been unfairly denied votes.

Politicians campaigning for Yes and No have said potential electors have not received a vote, despite filling in electoral-register forms.

Sinn Féin, the UK Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party are to make formal complaints to the Chief Electoral Officer.



Mo Mowlam and Richard Branson share a joke on walkabout in Belfast yesterday. Mr Branson is backing the 'Yes' campaign

Photograph: Crispin Rodwell/Reuters

## Will Unionists back Trimble or go with Paisley?

Past elections reveal supporters have switched allegiance. By David McKitterick

THE most important issue in the referendum campaign is whether a majority of Unionists will take the advice of David Trimble to vote "Yes" or follow the counsel of the Rev Ian Paisley and vote "No".

Although Mr Trimble's Ulster Unionists have always been the largest Protestant party, an examination of past elections shows that on certain occasions large numbers of its supporters have switched to Mr Paisley's Democratic Unionists.

The two parties are generally at odds, following the old precept that the battle between rivals can often be more bitter than that between outright opponents. But the figures show that many at grassroots level are

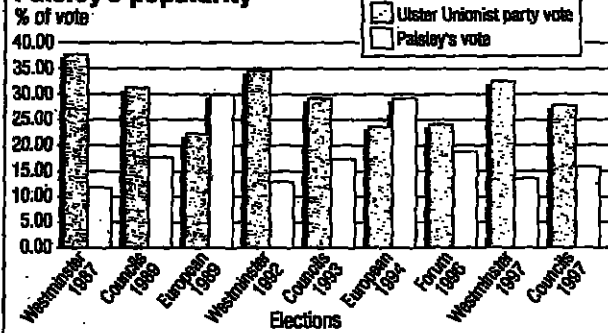
floating voters who regularly switch votes between the two.

The key question in Friday's vote is whether they will stick with the Trimble camp or, in the less frequent but established pattern, go with Paisley. There has never been an exact precedent for this referendum, but past performance sheds some light on the question.

Northern Ireland has gone through 22 elections in the last quarter of a century. Mr Paisley's worst performances come in Westminster elections where he averages 15 per cent.

This is because the sitting Unionist MPs are mostly members of the Ulster Unionists. In

### Paisley's popularity



a number of cases Mr Paisley is politically unable to run against these, since a split Protestant vote could allow a nationalist to take the seat.

The absence of DUP candi-

dates in such seats keeps the Paisley vote unusually low.

A different pattern can be seen in council elections where the proportional representation voting system removes the

danger of split Unionist votes. In these contests Mr Paisley takes an average of 20 per cent of the vote, a significant increase on his Westminster showing, though still behind Ulster Unionist levels.

This pattern is, however, dramatically reversed in European elections, which, ever since the 1970s, have represented a recurring personal triumph for Mr Paisley. In these contests he outstrips Mr Trimble's party, zooming ahead to an average vote of 31 per cent and taking a clear majority of Unionist votes.

These polls are regarded as "beauty contests," being the

only occasions when all ordinary Protestants can vote for Mr Paisley personally rather than voting for his party.

Although the DUP leader himself lays much stress on these particular contests, most commentators agree that European votes are much less important than elections to Westminster.

The significance of these European polls is that traditional Ulster Unionist party supporters feel free to transfer their allegiance to the DUP leader. His hope is that they will do so in large numbers on Friday, enabling him to claim that a majority of Unionists are against the agreement and have given him a mandate to wreck it.

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Mogens Tholstrup at his fashionable London restaurant The Collection in Knightsbridge, one of the three just sold

Photograph: Richard Young

## Restaurateur sells high society haunts for £3m

By Glenda Cooper  
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

"IS THERE a society woman who isn't in love with Mogens Tholstrup?" the *Daily Mail* once asked. If there was then, there is not now after the restaurateur to the It Girls has pocketed £5.5m for selling his restaurants.

Yesterday, it was announced that Mr Tholstrup, the owner of three of London's most fashionable restaurants - Daphne's, Pasha and The Collection - had sold them to the moules and frites chain, Belgio, earning around £3m in cash and £2.5m worth of shares.

Despite coming from a wealthy Danish family, when Mogens Tholstrup moved to London 12 years ago he was unknown. He set up his first restaurant Est, in Soho. But his rise to gossip columnist's darling came

after he rescued Daphne's in South Kensington, frequented in the Sixties by film stars and royalty. As Dai Lewellyn, the brother of Roddy, Princess Margaret's former boyfriend, said: "In 1993, when Mogens reopened Daphne's, I hadn't a clue who he was. Now I see him at the most exclusive house parties in the South of France and the smartest bar shoots in Germany."

For the opening of Daphne's, Mr Tholstrup invited the 800 most important people in London. It was the beginning of the beau monde flocking to Daphne's, especially since, unlike at San Lorenzo, their normal haunt, the paparazzi were not banned.

Mr Tholstrup, now with Lady Victoria Hervey, split from his wife, Paola Schlausen, a former model, and dated a succession of glamorous women, including It Girl Tara

Palmer-Johnson. Ms Palmer-Johnson's crowd were out in force when he launched The Collection.

Tracey MacLeod, restaurant reviewer for *The Independent's* Saturday magazine said: "When I went to The Collection it was full of shiny blondes and there was a certain sort of element... that had come up west for the evening. There was an awful lot of fake-tan legs... I was mesmerised by the shininess of it all."

The third restaurant, Pasha, which opened last November, looked to the increasing popularity of North African style.

The marriage of society ladies with Belgio's will raise a few eyebrows. Restaurant reviewer Ben Rogers said "Belgio's is like a theme park, it's like a factory. I can't see it. Are they going to have to wear monk's habits in Daphne's?"

## Shortages of blood may delay operations

By Louise Jury

OPERATIONS may be cancelled, depending on patients' blood types, because of a crisis in stocks of the most common Group O, it emerged yesterday.

The blood service in London and the South-east has appealed to hospitals to review waiting-lists for Group-O patients. Non-emergency surgery where the patient may require a transfusion may have to be postponed after stocks sank to half a day's supply. Marcela Contreras, the region's executive director, has told consultant haematologists and laboratory staff that the move was necessary to ensure an adequate supply of Group O, regarded as a near-universal type for emergency use.

"We are acutely aware that, following several weeks of restricting your supplies, many of you are operating with critically low stocks of Group-O blood and are facing the prospect of taking uncomfortable clinical decisions." Radio appeals for donors have resulted in improvements in stocks but it will be some time before they have recovered to more normal levels. Shortages across the country meant other regions were unable to help.

Details of the "rescheduling" of surgery were revealed yesterday at the first public meeting of the National Blood Authority (NBA), which has, like other quangos, previously met in private. Figures at the meeting show the authority was £109,000 in deficit for the year

to March, but that the budget for this year is under serious pressure because of factors including the CJD crisis.

Mike Fogden, the chairman appointed to replace Sir Colin Walker, sacked by the Government in March, has told staff the cost to the service of CJD is likely to be £87m.

One example given yesterday of the problems was that some hospitals were already switching from the service's FFP (fresh frozen plasma) to a commercial alternative, Octaplas.

If that continued, it could cost the NBA of £8.5m in lost revenue.

Evan Harris, MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, who has campaigned on the blood service, said he was worried about spiralling costs and cancelled surgery, which comes as the Government is due to make an announcement on waiting-lists today. "The news that Group-O patients will be discriminated against in terms of getting their operations represents a further distortion of clinical priorities. The Government is failing to get a grip on the crisis engulfing the nation's blood supply."

Dr Harris said he was particularly appalled that at no stage during yesterday's meeting was there any discussion on the recent, damning report on the NBA. It was set up by the Conservatives five years ago to improve efficiency and cut costs in the service.

But the cost of the service has risen from £140m in 1994 to more than £207m last year.

## Everest team forced to delay final ascent

By Charles Arthur

THE TOP of the world will have to wait. Bad weather and a lack of preparation have forced *The Independent's* Stephen Goodwin and other climbers on the Himalayan Kingdoms team to postpone their attempt on the summit of Mt Everest, originally planned for yesterday.

Instead, they have retreated from Camp 4, high on the mountain, to wait for better weather - expected at the weekend.

"They didn't manage to get to the summit, and they've come down from Camp 4 to Camp 2," said Rob Owen, head of the Himalayan Kingdoms expedition on a satellite phone from Everest Base Camp yesterday.

"The problem is that the ropes weren't fixed all the way up. But there's a weather window coming in a couple of days," he said.

Most climbers on Everest use "fixed" ropes to pull themselves up steep sections, because

at high altitude it is both exhausting and highly risky to try to climb unaided.

But because no teams had reached the summit until yesterday there were no fixed ropes, particularly on the "Hillary Step", a 20m section of rock and ice near the 8,848m summit.

However, on Wednesday a team of four Iranians and their Sherpas and two American teams reached the summit, meaning fixed ropes will be there for later teams.

After their equipment and tents were almost blown off the mountain by a storm, the Himalayan Kingdoms team is again wrestling with technology. "All our radios have blown up but one, so we haven't had much contact with the team," said Owen.

One of the Americans who reached the summit yesterday planted a GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver at the summit to find out just how big the lump of rock is, and whether it is getting any bigger.

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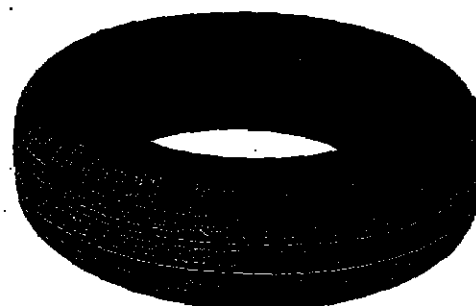
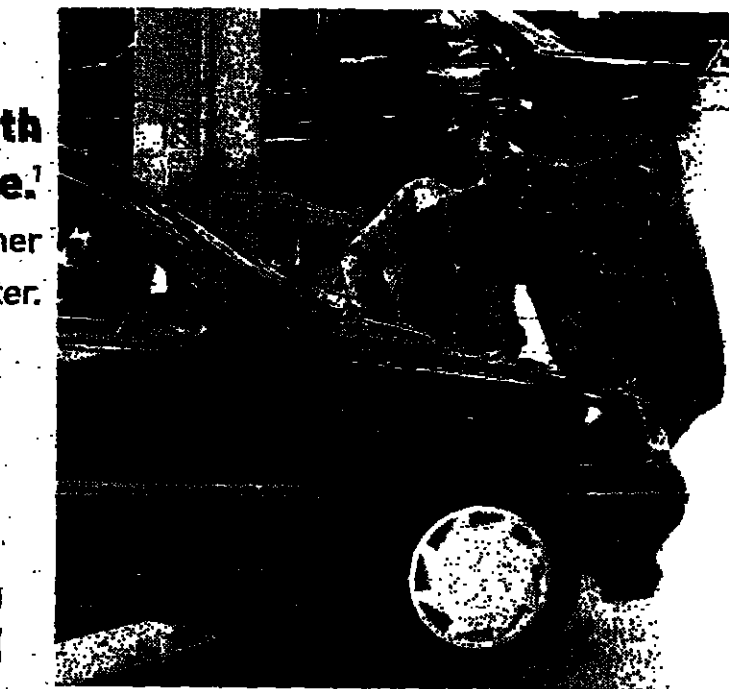
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'Activa' has allowed Mr Sandercock to regain skills he lost years ago, such as shaving.

## Wires in the brain offer hope to Parkinson's victims

By Charles Arthur  
Science and Technology Editor

GRAHAM SANDERCOCK was only 37 when he developed Parkinson's disease. From leading an active life as a father of two and working as a painter and decorator, he found himself gradually losing control of his body, until he was unable to walk, unable to wash, unable even to eat.

Now 52, he contemplates the fist-sized mechanism that was attached to his collarbone in a five-hour operation. "I have got a new life. Now I can get out of bed by myself. I can wash myself, dress myself and go for a walk. I no longer need help during the day, and sleep well at night."

The cause of his happiness is a device that provides sufferers of Parkinson's disease with an on-off switch to control their symptoms - like a "pacemaker" for the brain - which was launched in Britain yesterday.

Using electrodes implanted deep in the brain and connected to a battery-powered transmitter, the novel treatment, called Activa, can ease or even wipe out the symptoms of the disease, which leaves sufferers shaking involuntarily or frozen in immobility.

The treatment - made by



The 'neurological pulse generator', left, sends a current through wires implanted deep inside the brain. Ross Parry

the American company Medtronic - could, in theory, help up to 20,000 of the 125,000 people diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in the UK every year. But its cost - £5,000 for the device, £7,000-£10,000 for the operation to install it, and thousands more to maintain it - will count against it at a time when health spending is being pushed towards cutting waiting lists, and expensive therapies struggle for health managers' acceptance.

However, both the Parkinson's Disease Society and doc-

tors who have pioneered the system say that, compared to price of expensive medication and long-term care, it could be cost-effective. Drugs for controlling the symptoms of Parkinson's disease can cost £15,000 a year.

Most of those diagnosed as having Parkinson's disease are elderly, but the Activa therapy is seen as being chiefly of benefit to sufferers in their thirties or forties. Often, these patients find that drugs become less effective over the years and, as the dosage is increased,

they can induce wild movements of the head.

Mary Baker, president of the European Parkinson's Disease Association, said it is vital to persuade those paying for health care to offer the therapy. "Nobody knows what Parkinson's disease is costing the country," she said. "We have to provide the evidence."

Parkinsonism is caused when brain cells making the neurotransmitter dopamine degenerate; the effect is loss of movement control. Surgical techniques involve burning

away ineffective cells, but require great accuracy. Activa applies an electrical stimulus - thus avoiding the risks of burning a hole in the brain.

The transmitter is implanted near the collar bone, and the connecting wire and electrodes are also hidden under the skin. The patient uses a magnetic device to control the transmitter. Mr Sandercock finds that this is the only drawback: he cannot walk unchallenged through airport control or pass duty without it getting attached to him.



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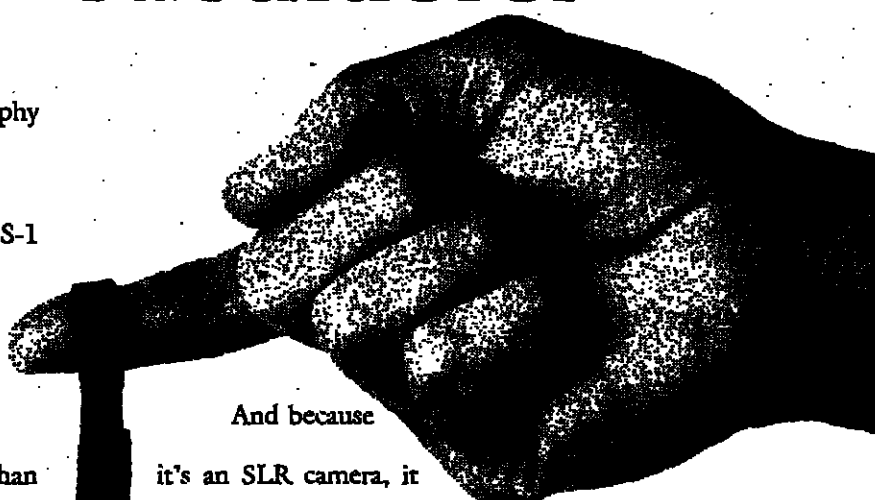
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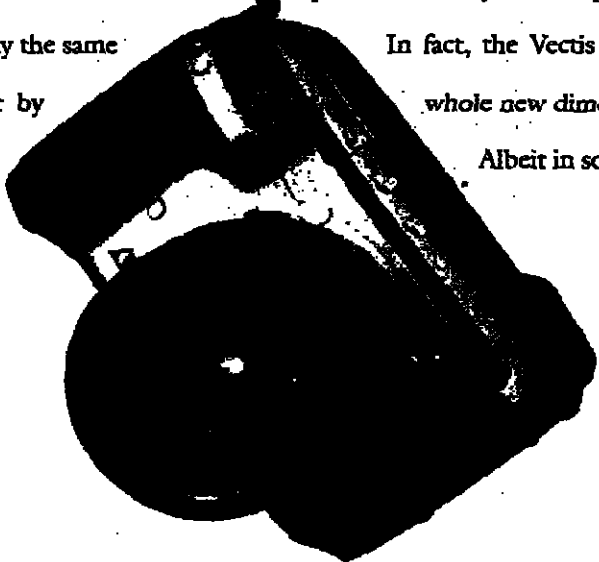
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## TUC battles on over union recognition

Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

UNION leaders registered their determination to campaign against a critical part of a radical white paper on employees' rights to be published today.

While welcoming the general thrust of the document, which proposes the introduction of a series of important new rights in the workplace, the inner circle of the Trades Union Congress yesterday decided to continue its fight against Government proposals on union recognition.

In particular, the TUC executive opted to prosecute its battle against Downing Street over the insistence that 40 per cent of any workplace must back the introduction of collective bargaining, not just a simple majority of those voting in a ballot.

Employees' representatives

will also campaign against a proposal to exempt all organisations employing fewer than 20 employees from the proposed legislation on recognition.

The one union leader to distance himself from the TUC's stance was Ken Jackson, general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, who expressed his "100 per cent backing" for the package of proposals.

The "fairness at work" white paper will mark an historic departure from the policies of previous successive Conservative governments, but will propose a relatively tough test before union recognition wins the backing of the law.

As a gesture towards "Old Labour" critics, however, it envisages that the 40 per cent formula should be reviewed after two years. Significantly, it is ex-

pected that the percentage figure will not be included in legislation but in supporting regulations, which can be changed without a full-scale parliamentary debate.

Another "sweetener" is expected to be that where an employer insists on a ballot, the company must foot half the bill.

Unions and dissident backbench Labour MPs will also welcome a concession whereby recognition will be "automatic" where more than half of a workforce are union members.

Mr Jackson said the recognition debate was now over and there was no point in the TUC campaigning for something that was not achievable.

But John Edmunds, general secretary of the GMB union, said the campaign over the 40 per cent formula would "go on and on".

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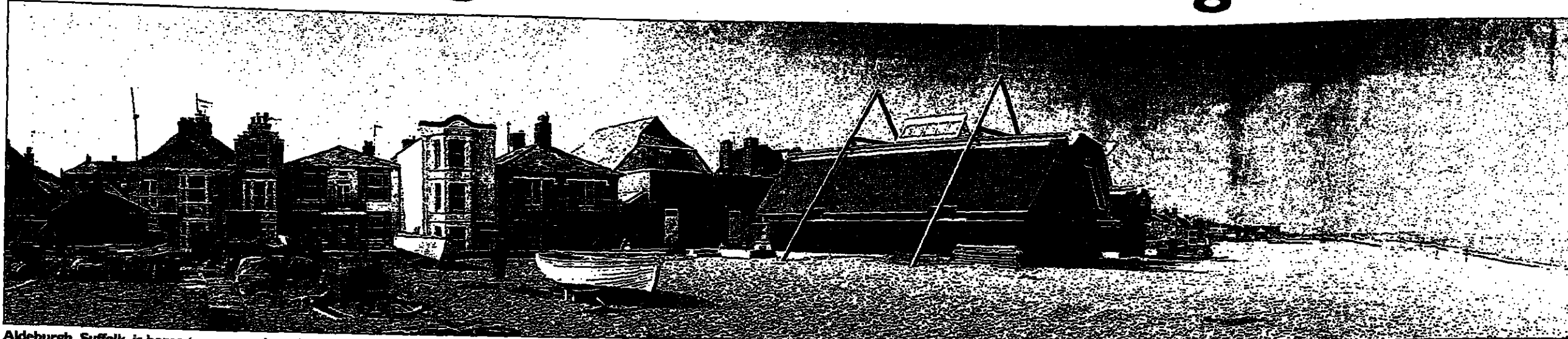
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# Airport brings discord to Aldeburgh Festival



Aldeburgh, Suffolk, is home to an annual music festival that attracts 70,000 visitors; it is also next door to a designated area of outstanding beauty which is the planned site for an airport running 30,000 flights a year

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

By Kate Watson-Smyth

A PLAN to turn a disused airbase into a commercial airport which operates up to 80 flights a day could ruin the internationally renowned Aldeburgh Festival, residents of a Suffolk village claimed yesterday.

The two-and-a-half-week festival attracts more than 70,000 visitors every year as well as performers from all over the world who come to record their work. Organisers are concerned that the noise of the planes will drown out the music.

The site for Anglia International Airport (AIA), which is only three miles from Aldeburgh, was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1969 and the villagers are also concerned that such a major development will spoil the area.

Jonathan Reekie, chief executive of Aldeburgh Productions, said that 40 per cent of the audience for the festival came from outside the region and he was concerned that the airport might have a detrimental effect on the area.

"We are also concerned about recording - when the Americans [who left in 1993] were here they agreed not to fly near us on days when we were recording but you cannot expect a commercial airport to cancel scheduled flights for us," he said.

On recording days no cars are allowed to drive up to the concert hall at Snape Maltings and passers-by are requested to keep silent.

"The developers have said that the airport will provide jobs in the area but one cannot help thinking that it will lead to the

destruction of existing jobs in tourism - people will not want to come here for a peaceful holiday when there are planes flying over all the time," he added.

"We will be studying the proposals very carefully and if necessary we will object strongly," Nick Bushill, chairman of the

Alde and Ore Association, said the airport might bring advantages, but he was concerned about aircraft noise and increased traffic on minor roads.

Bentwaters Investments, which bought the site from the Ministry of Defence last year, said yesterday that it would be

submitting planning permission today and declined to comment in advance.

But a brochure produced by the company said it planned to operate as a business airport and would cater for aircraft maintenance, business, private and training flights. "AIA plans

to attract within five years over 30,000 flights per year ... serving 100,000 yearly passengers."

However, Gregory Luton, director of the Suffolk Preservation Society, said government guidelines stipulated that there should be no major development in an Area of Natural Beauty unless

there was a proven national need for it and there was no suitable alternative site. "The previous airbase was there because there was a war on but you would not choose to put an airfield there now because it is an Area of Natural Beauty," he said. "We do not want to be seen

as Nimbs [Not In My Back Yard] but there is no point in having these designations if they can be breached at any opportunity. The area does not have a suitable infrastructure ... unlike Ipswich which until recently had a perfectly good sub-regional airport."

## Greenhouse effect worse than forecast

By Charles Arthur  
Science and Technology Editor

GLOBAL warming will get worse and the world's oceans and land-based ecosystems will be less able to ease it by absorbing excess carbon dioxide than had been thought, say scientists.

The new findings show that earlier assumptions, used to build the Kyoto agreement between industrialised nations limiting carbon dioxide and other emissions, were too optimistic.

Instead, the sophisticated new computer models, devised to examine how well non-atmospheric sources could absorb the gases produced by the burning of fossil fuels, indicate that, in time, neither the oceans nor forests will be able to "fix" gases which contribute to the warming of the planet.

The findings, published today in two papers in the science journal *Nature*, show that earlier hopes - that the sea, in particular, might be able to act as a huge "sink" for atmospheric carbon dioxide - were exaggerated.

Those expectations were built in to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Commenting on the latest work, David Schimel, of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado, said the differences from the IPCC's baseline estimates

"has serious implications for policy designed to stabilise the concentration of trace gases in the atmosphere".

A team at Princeton University in New Jersey found that as the ocean began to absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (becoming more acidic in the process), it would also become more "stratified" - so that there would be less mixing between the top and lower layers.

The topmost layers, which are most exposed to higher atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases, would reach a point where they could not absorb any more gases more quickly. That means the ocean would stop acting as a brake on atmospheric global warming.

In the atmosphere, carbon dioxide acts to absorb radiation from the sun, making the temperature higher. While some global warming is essential to life, too much change too quickly could cause catastrophic "climate change" - which some scientists say has already begun.

Another paper by a team at the University of Sheffield, investigating land-based systems' reaction to higher carbon dioxide levels, discovered that while the gas helps vegetation for a while (because plants use it for photosynthesis), "this response will decline".

## Pay fewer teachers more, says Hodge

By Judith Judd  
Education Editor

SCHOOLS should employ fewer teachers, not more, so that those who are not up to the job are kept out of the profession, according to Margaret Hodge, influential chair of the Commons Select Committee on Education.

More classroom assistants should be employed, she says, and pupils given lessons on the Internet.

Her remarks come as the Government is trying to recruit more teachers through a £1.5m advertising campaign.

Writing in the *New Statesman*, Ms Hodge - who has already infuriated teachers by suggesting that they should have shorter holidays - argues that in 10 years "the teachers' monopoly in the classroom will be brought to an end". In its place would be an elite force of well-paid, high-quality teachers, backed by trained assistants.

"If pupils are working from lessons on the Internet, a trained classroom assistant may be as useful as a teacher. At Thomas Telford City Technology College, students are already studying for their A-levels via the Internet. They can access lesson plans and even conduct science experiments without leaving home," she says.

Ms Hodge says people should not be accepted into teaching "purely to make up the numbers". One chemistry teacher had lost his pupils' respect to the extent that they locked him in a store cupboard.

With many students entering teacher training courses with only a C and two Ds at A-level, it is impossible to give teaching the status it deserves, she argues.

A spokeswoman for the National Union of Teachers said: "To assume that academic excellence is the same as high-quality teaching shows that Ms Hodge fails to understand the dynamic of the profession."

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**FIAT**

## Benefits probe was a crass muddle, say MPs

By Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

The Social Security investigator who asked a young man how old he was when he "contracted" Down's syndrome yesterday summed up the gross incompetence and crass insensitivity of a disability benefits review launched just three days before the last election.

In a report on Disability Living Allowance (DLA), the all-party Commons Social Security Committee said that the controversial Benefit Integrity Project (BIP), set up to crack down on fraud, had been unacceptably launched, muddled in its planning, and appalling in its delivery.

The MPs' conclusion was that the entire exercise had been so inept that more than 5,000 people who had had their benefit withdrawn, and another 9,000-plus who had had their benefit cut, before 23 March – when fundamental modifications had been introduced – "should be contacted and offered a fresh assessment under the new procedures".

The DLA has an estimated 2 million claimants, at an annual

cost of £5bn, and the last government set up the BIP to deal with an estimated £500m fraud. Virtually no fraudulent claims have since been unearthed.

Under the scheme, however, people who should have been exempt from the benefits review – like the terminally ill – were targeted and had their benefits cut; and many people only discovered benefits had been stopped when they went to the Post Office or bank. "This is causing shock and distress and seems utterly disrespectful," the MPs said.

But the most astonishing charge levelled against the civil servants who organised the débâcle was the inadequacy of training given to the 400 Benefits Agency staff carrying out the on-the-ground investigation.

The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation told the MPs that it had "grave concerns about the quality of the visits and the lack of awareness of disability". They cited the Down's syndrome question as an example.

In evidence, Bill Farrell, the BIP project manager, said some officials making their first visit to someone claiming DLA, "would

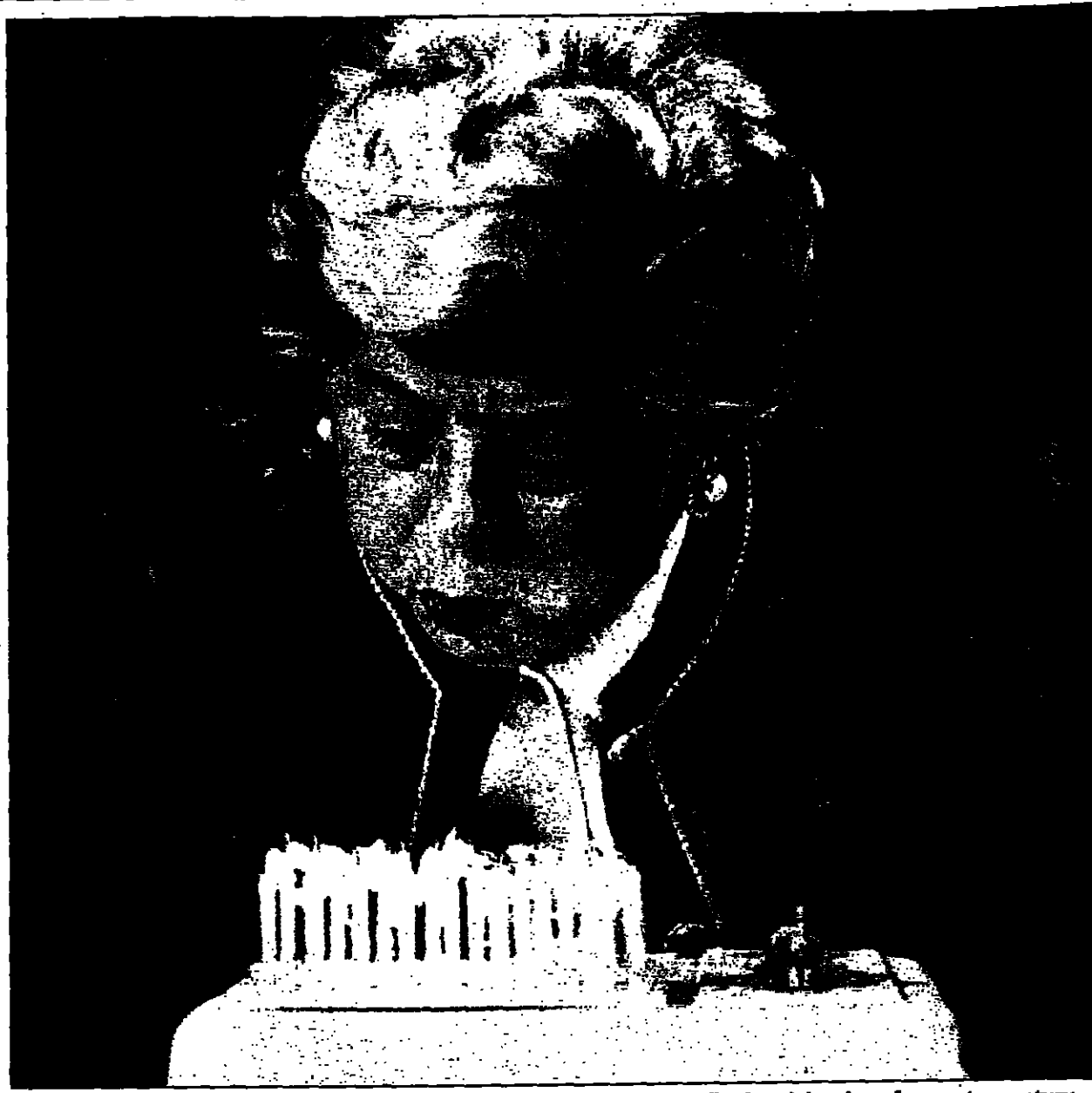
have had no recent contact with disabled people".

However, the Disabling Income Group (DIG), which helped with a five-day training course for visiting officials, said a significant minority of trainees had no experience of DLA, and it added: "A majority had not met any disabled people." The DIG stated: "We took the view that what we were engaged in was essentially damage limitation: the prospect of inexperienced visitors without adequate skills training, calling on disabled people in the context of a benefit as important as DLA, was, frankly, too awful to contemplate."

The MPs were also critical of a benefit with significant weaknesses; too complex for claimants and officials to understand.

The report said the failings of the benefit were so fundamental that only radical surgery could clear them up, and the Integrity project should be put on six months' probation to see how current changes settled down.

Mark Oaten, the Liberal Democrat spokesman, said last night that the committee's "damning findings" on the BIP suggested that it should be scrapped at once.



Betty Boothroyd, Speaker of the House of Commons, blowing out 25 candles in celebration of a quarter-century in politics; she entered the House in May 1973, as Labour MP for West Bromwich

Photograph: Ben Curtis

## Single parents get good deal

By Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

SINGLE parents who have taken up Labour's New Deal have more money in their pocket and are costing less to the state, according to the first figures released from the evaluation programme.

The programme has looked at the first eight months of the scheme, and interim results suggest that between 1.5 per cent and 7 per cent fewer single parents are claiming income support in New Deal areas compared to areas where it had not been introduced.

The New Deal was launched last July to enable 500,000 parents to get back to work. Personal advisers are at the centre of the scheme, which will ensure that all lone parents will be invited to JobCentres for advice on getting work once their children reach school age.

The Department for Social Security set up an independent evaluation to see if the £190m scheme was working. Full results are expected in October 1999.

An internal study by the DSS suggests that lone parents who had taken part in the New Deal were £39 better off per week, and that they were also costing the state £42 less a week in benefits.

## Navy helped during Sierra Leone coup

By Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

ROYAL NAVY ships went to the aid of war-torn Sierra Leone within days of the start of a counter-coup backed by British mercenaries, it was revealed last night.

As demands grew for Robin Cook to come to the House of Commons to explain apparent discrepancies in his statements on the affair, there was increasing speculation about the level of British military involvement.

HMS Monmouth was in Guinea, where the exiled President Kabbah was based, by 14 February – just a few days after soldiers backed by the British firm Sandline International began their assault on Freetown. Monmouth and HMS Cornwall, which arrived later, were in the area to provide humanitarian assistance, according to a Parliamentary answer from George Robertson, the Defence Secretary. There were suggestions last night that the ship, HMS Nottingham, also went to the area.

Last night John Morris, the Attorney General, revealed in a written answer he had learned about a Customs and Excise investigation into Sandline's breach of a UN arms embargo in early April, weeks before other ministers. Tony Lloyd, the Foreign Office minister, was sent information about the investigation in mid-April while Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, did not know until he received a letter from Sandline's solicitors on 28 April.

Officials including Sir John Kerr, the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office, knew about allegations that staff colluded with Sandline in early April. Sir John told MPs last week he did not inform Mr Cook because it was a "house-keeping matter". Yesterday Conservatives maintained pressure on the Government after the belated revelation that five intelligence reports in February warned of Sandline's breach of the arms embargo. Mr Cook told the Commons last night that no such reports existed, but later had to retract.

Michael Howard, the shadow Foreign Secretary, wrote to Mr Cook again to demand he apologise in person to MPs. "This latest revelation is extraordinary. Did you not check whether intelligence reports had been received? ... If so, how could the receipt of those telegrams have ... been missed?"

There were also claims last night that Sir Thomas Legg, appointed to conduct an independent inquiry into the affair, was unreliable because he once had to apologise for misleading a Commons committee.

At Prime Minister's Questions Tony Blair denied Mr Cook had misled the House. The Conservatives had shown little or no interest in Sierra Leone until recent weeks and their front bench had not even bothered to attend a Commons debate on 12 March, he said.

"From last May not a single question was tabled by the shadow Foreign Secretary or his deputy. On 12 March, this great debate where they say we should have explained everything, not a single Tory front-bencher even turned up."

Indonesia crisis, page 14

## Hague's Euro speech deepens divide with Tory moderates

By Anthony Bevins

THE ROW over William Hague's Fontainebleau speech caused even greater Conservative divisions yesterday, to the evident glee of Tony Blair, who told the Commons the Tory leader had aligned himself with the Eurosceptics.

With Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine protesting most strongly against their party leader's line, the single currency could provoke the kind of violence associated with Bosnia or Indonesia, Mr Hague mustered quick support from Sir Teddy Taylor and Lord Tebbit.

Sir Teddy, MP for Rochford and Southend East, said: "I think the time has come when people have to say we support the party and support the leader or go elsewhere."

But there is no question of the Tory moderates leaving the party to the likes of Sir Teddy – or a Eurosceptic leader.

Having said last Monday night that Mr Hague's language was "more extreme than even Mrs Thatcher used", Mr Heseltine told yesterday's BBC Radio 4 Today programme: "We have been flirting with Euroscepticism now for two to three years. If you are not getting the slightest encouragement in the early flirtation, the prospects of the affair ... sound pretty remote to me."



Teddy Taylor: "Support the leader or go elsewhere"

The former deputy prime minister added: "The party has got 28 points in the opinion polls and there is a huge raft of Conservatives out there that used to be Conservatives and aren't. They have to be got back and getting them back involves having policies that appeal to a wide spectrum of constituencies and the electorate."

Lord Tebbit said of Mr Heseltine and his allies: "They observe it will be impossible for the Conservatives to win the election without the support of the minority of Europhiles."

"But they ignore the fact that it would be impossible to win

that election on a programme which offends the vast majority of Conservatives who believe we have already gone too far into European integration and that to enter monetary union would be the end to self-government."

Enjoying all the fruits of that Tory rift, Mr Blair appeared to take a quiet delight in the more extreme line being taken by Mr Hague – a line that would marginalise him in Europe, and at last weekend's Birmingham summit of leaders of the Group of Eight industrialised countries.

He told Sir Teddy that the truth of the Fontainebleau speech was that Mr Hague had joined the likes of John Redwood, the Tory trade and industry spokesman, against Mr Clarke – "and I think that is an interesting decision".

Later, he told another Tory Eurosceptic, Bernard Jenkin: "It is bizarre to claim that European Monetary Union is not supported by the countries joining it. So far as this country is concerned, we have made it clear it will be subject to a referendum. It would be very foolish of Conservative MPs to get themselves into the position of hoping that monetary union fails."

The Prime Minister then added that on the issue as a whole, the Tories had been wrong "at every single juncture".

Leading article, page 20

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## Penguin sponsors literature courses

By Ben Russell  
Education Correspondent

OIL companies may sponsor motor racing and *Coronation Street* comes courtesy of Cadbury's. Now a University of London college has signed up sponsorship for some of the greats of English literature.

The study of Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens and TS Eliot now comes to Royal Holloway College students "in association with" the publisher Penguin Classics, in the latest attempt to bring commerce to the quiet world of academia.

The publisher's famous penguin logo will even grace the Egham college's prospectus under the deal, the first in which a university arts course has been linked to a commercial sponsor. Editors at Penguin now hope that the idea will be taken up at universities across Britain and abroad.

Under the three-year deal Penguin will supply £3,500 worth of books for the college library and offer discounts worth about £40 to students buying classic texts. In return a string of undergraduate and postgraduate courses will bear the Penguin name.

Royal Holloway's head of English, Professor Kieran Ryan, said: "People were anxious about being tainted; that the high spiritual value of literature and poetry was being linked with commercialism, but it's a sign of the times in the new Blairite world. I can hear people's cries of our selling out, but they will be clouded by envy that they did not think of it themselves."

The deal, the brainchild of

Dr Robert Mighall, editor of Penguin Classics, and the English lecturer Dr Robert Eaglestone, is part of a trend towards increasing commercial sponsorship of universities. Private-sector finance pays for many university buildings, and controversy has raged over business sponsorship of professorships and research posts.

It is also the latest salvo in the battle for supremacy in publishing. Classic literature has become a million-pound-a-year business. But it is fiercely competitive, with cut-price editions of classic novels attacking the sales of academic paperbacks that include learned essays and footnotes.

Dr Mighall said: "Brand loyalty is the key thing. If academics know they can rely on us to supply what they need, which is reliable and reputable texts, it's worth spending the extra on an edition of *Jane Eyre*."

"We're aware that students are some of our major customers, and we're keen to put something back into the academic community."

Dr Eaglestone stressed that the deal would not compromise academic freedom. He said: "The English department will always recommend the best edition whether it's published by Penguin or not. This is simply providing more resources to help students learn and help research in the college."

The Association of University Teachers urged caution. A spokeswoman said: "After 15 years of cuts, higher education is forced to accept things it would not have considered 20 years ago. People in universities are using their creativity to find any way to get money."

## ME teenager wins home tuition battle

A TEENAGER suffering from the debilitating disease ME won a landmark legal victory yesterday against an education authority's decision to reduce her weekly home tuition.

Five law lords unanimously overturned a Court of Appeal ruling that East Sussex County Council was entitled to make the reductions in the case of 16-year-old Beth Tandy, from Lewes, following cuts to its education budget.

Beth, who is sitting GCSEs, stopped attending school because of myalgic encephalomyelitis - ME - in February 1992 and was given five

absent from school because of illness.

He said: "To permit a local authority to avoid performing a statutory duty on the grounds that it prefers to spend the money in other ways, is to downgrade a statutory duty to a discretionary power."

"If Parliament wishes to reduce public expenditure on meeting the needs of sick children, then it is up to Parliament so to provide."

However, he expressed sympathy for the county council: "Like all other local authorities, the [council] is in an unenviable position. It is now prevented from obtaining either from central government or from local taxation the financial resources necessary to discharge its functions as it would like to do."

"In a period when the aim of central government, of whatever political colour, has been to achieve a reduction in public spending, local authorities have not been relieved of statutory duties imposed upon them by Parliament in times past when different attitudes prevailed."

Later Beth's solicitor, William Garnett, said: "This is great news for vulnerable members of society who are beneficiaries of statutory duties."

"It is also a marvellous victory for Beth. It is an achievement she will value all her life."

Throughout her long battle in the courts, Beth has continued to receive her full five hours' home tuition per week pending today's ruling. The education authority's statutory duty to Beth comes to an end next month because of her age.

Later East Sussex County Council said in a statement: "We are reviewing our policy in the light of today's announcement... It is of national importance and has implications for all local authorities."

The ME Association welcomed the ruling. It said: "This is a victory for common sense."



Beth Tandy. Tuition victory to have far-reaching results

hours' home tuition per week. But the education authority, which had to find ways of making savings of more than £3m, decided in September 1996 to cut the time to three hours.

Yesterday the House of Lords ruled that the county council had not been entitled to take into account the scarcity of its resources when fulfilling its statutory duty to provide "a suitable education" for Beth.

Lord Browne-Wilkinson said the council was under a duty under section 19 of the 1996 Education Act to make tuition available for children who were



Two characters on stage performing in the Robert Wilson and Philip Glass multimedia production of the *Monsters of Grace*, which combines stereoscopic animation and live performance to produce a surreal stage show. *Monsters of Grace* is at the Barbican theatre in London until 23 May. Photograph: Geraint Lewis



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## EU's trade dispute with Israel heats up

By Patrick Cockburn  
in Jerusalem

EUROPEAN Union officials said they were unlikely to water down restrictions on the import of goods from Jewish settlements marked Made in Israel.

The European Council is to discuss the proposal by the European Commission on 8 June and EU officials say that the situation is unlikely to be altered.

The dispute escalated this week when Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, said that a refusal to treat goods from the occupied territories as Israeli would make it impossible for the EU to play a part in the Middle East peace process.

The European Commission insists the move is not political, but is simply the application of existing laws under which only goods which are really made in Israel benefit from customs reductions. Nevertheless, Zelman Shoval, the Israeli ambassador-designate to the United States, compared the action to what happened in Germany in the Thirties. "We saw a similar boycott of Jewish goods 50 years ago," he said.

This verbal escalation by Mr Netanyahu and Mr Shoval is a familiar tactic, designed to put their opponent on the defensive. It is not clear how far it has worked in this case. After Yaakov Neeman, the Israeli finance minister, saw the 15 EU ambassadors yesterday, he said the meeting was "very constructive".

Earlier, the EU Commission had responded brusquely to Mr Netanyahu's remarks by saying: "The EU is not willing to listen to a political lecture from Tel Aviv."

Europe is Israel's third biggest trading partner and the withdrawal of privileges would seriously hit the country's agriculture. The EU also has a trade agreement with the Palestinian Authority. The enforcement of trade regulations to the letter is the EU's only effective means of putting pressure on Israel.



While the Lebanese are trying to attract tourists with glamour and a lick of paint to cover the damage of war-torn Beirut (inset) the reality is less civilised. Photograph: Magnum

# Glitz fails to hide the real Lebanon

Robert Fisk in Beirut tries to reconcile a tourist drive with public executions

TWO policemen called to see my landlord the other day and told him to repair and paint the facade of his apartment block. He could pay for it himself, they said, or let the government do the job and send him the bill.

Mustafa, who knows the law, grudgingly accepted his new duties. The government of Beirut wants to spruce up the seafont corniche. The new Lebanon has to look smart, clean, modern and into the future - especially for all the tourists who are supposed to be flooding back.

Just up the coast from my home this week, however, the same government was projecting a somewhat different image for foreign visitors - by stringing up two convicted murderers in front of a crowd which watched in awe as one of the condemned men wriggled desperately on the noose for two minutes before dying.

What, one wondered, was this awful scene supposed to say about Lebanon? In a land where tourists can ski in the morning and swim in the afternoon, are they supposed to take in a public hanging before breakfast?

Indeed, many of those who came to gawp at the last moments of Wissam Issa and Hassan Jabal were heading home from night clubs when they caught sight of the crowds at Tabarja and finished their evening watching Issa - swooning in fear and weeping uncontrollably - being dragged to the gallows.

On the orders of President Hrawi, their death sentences for the murder of Charbel Sakim

and his sister Marie Amm during a domestic robbery in 1995 were carried out in public "to set an example".

The "example" included hooded executioners, one of whom had to tighten the noose around the necks of the young men - they were 24 and 25 years old - when they continued to gasp for breath two minutes after their hanging commenced.

Now the Lebanese President is a very interesting man. Earlier this year, he was demanding a civil society in Lebanon and civil marriage, a pointedly liberal step which flushed out all

animals in the eyes of the world?"

Lebanon's previous 12 post-war executions have been carried out in prisons, so the public did not have to witness the botched hanging of a man in Sidon when policemen had to pull his feet to strangle him after the gallows broke.

Nor did they have to see the coup de grace to a still living man who had already been shot by a firing squad at Rounieh prison. Both were convicted murderers although the killing of Charbel Sakim was unpremeditated and one of the

they wear smart suits and ties and drive in limousines with bodyguards. Wissam Issa and Hassan Jabal were uneducated, poor and single. Issa was given five minutes to say goodbye to his parents; he wrote a last note asking them to educate his younger brothers.

The finest report of the Tabarja horror was by a reporter on Lebanon's English-language *L'Orient Le Jour* newspaper, Scarlett Haddad. Ignoring the appeals of Amnesty and other human rights groups, she said, her country was breaking execution records, "as if that was enough to give its institutions credibility".

I suggested to Lebanese friends on Tuesday that although people here generally support capital punishment, there was a sickness in human beings which drew them to watch publicly-inflicted violence.

I reminded them that George Bernard Shaw once said that if Christians were thrown to the lions in the Royal Albert Hall, there would be packed houses every night. They agreed. "I don't want my country to be represented by a noose," one of them said. "I want it to be a place of beauty."

Which was the ambition of the two policemen who told my landlord to clean up his act and paint the house. Why, now the government is going to plant flowers and bushes down the corniche below my balcony and sew fresh grass on the central reservation? Who knows, just to strike a balance, they might even erect a gallows or two on the seafont?

In a land where tourists can ski in the morning and swim in the afternoon, do they take in a public hanging before breakfast?



the sinister resentment of Muslim and Christian clerics who saw their sectarian power endangered. But the plain people of Lebanon loved Hrawi for it.

Two elderly, and very conservative Shiite Muslim sisters - daughters of an Islamic scholar - told me they fully supported what Hrawi, a Christian, was doing. "It is the best thing any president has done for us," the younger sister said then.

On Tuesday she was on the phone in fury. "Are they mad, this government?" she asked. "Do they want us to look like

men publicly hanged at Tabarja - Hassan Jabal - had been outside the house when his friend panicked and shot dead Charbel and Marie during the robbery.

Nor could it have escaped the attention of the crowd at the Tabarja hangings that at least two - or let us be frank and say three - members of President Hrawi's government have blood on their hands, in one case the blood of up to 2,000 men, women and children.

But that, of course, was during the 1975-90 civil war. Today

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# Made in Britain: the tanks on Jakarta's streets

By Rupert Cornwell

THE USE by the Indonesian security forces of British-made tanks to control pro-democracy protests in Jakarta has underlined one glaring truth of the arms business: that whatever the assurances to the contrary, an exporter has no means of preventing an authoritarian regime turning such weaponry against its own people.

The Scorpion light tanks seen on the streets of the capital are among 50, according to the latest survey of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), supplied to the Suharto regime by the previous Conservative government, in return for assurances they would not be used to suppress internal political dissent.

As well as the Scorpions, Britain has sold armoured personnel carriers, armoured cars and watercannon (in addition to more than 50 Hawk trainer aircraft which reportedly have been used against rebels in East Timor but which have little purpose in the current standoff).

The question is, whether the supply of such weaponry has continued even after the arrival

of new Labour and its "ethical" foreign policy, placing a primacy on human rights. Last year, the new government allowed through a sale of Hawk aircraft which had been authorised by the Tories. But, despite denials as recently as last week by the Foreign Secretary, charges have been levelled that Scorpions of the type seen in the past few days in Jakarta have been exported since last May. The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, led by Lord Avebury, claims that Scorpions have found their way to Indonesia in "kit" form, and that they could have been deployed in the latest unrest.

In the Commons last week, the Government admitted that 51 licences to Indonesia had been granted in the past year, mostly in the categories of aircraft and electronic equipment, but including small arms, riot control gear, armoured goods and training equipment.

In fact, the disclosure raises more questions than it answers.

Under its proclaimed doctrine of "transparency", this government is committed to producing a first annual report on Britain's arms exports, which should be published within two

months. But the value of the exercise, activists say, will depend entirely on the detail provided.

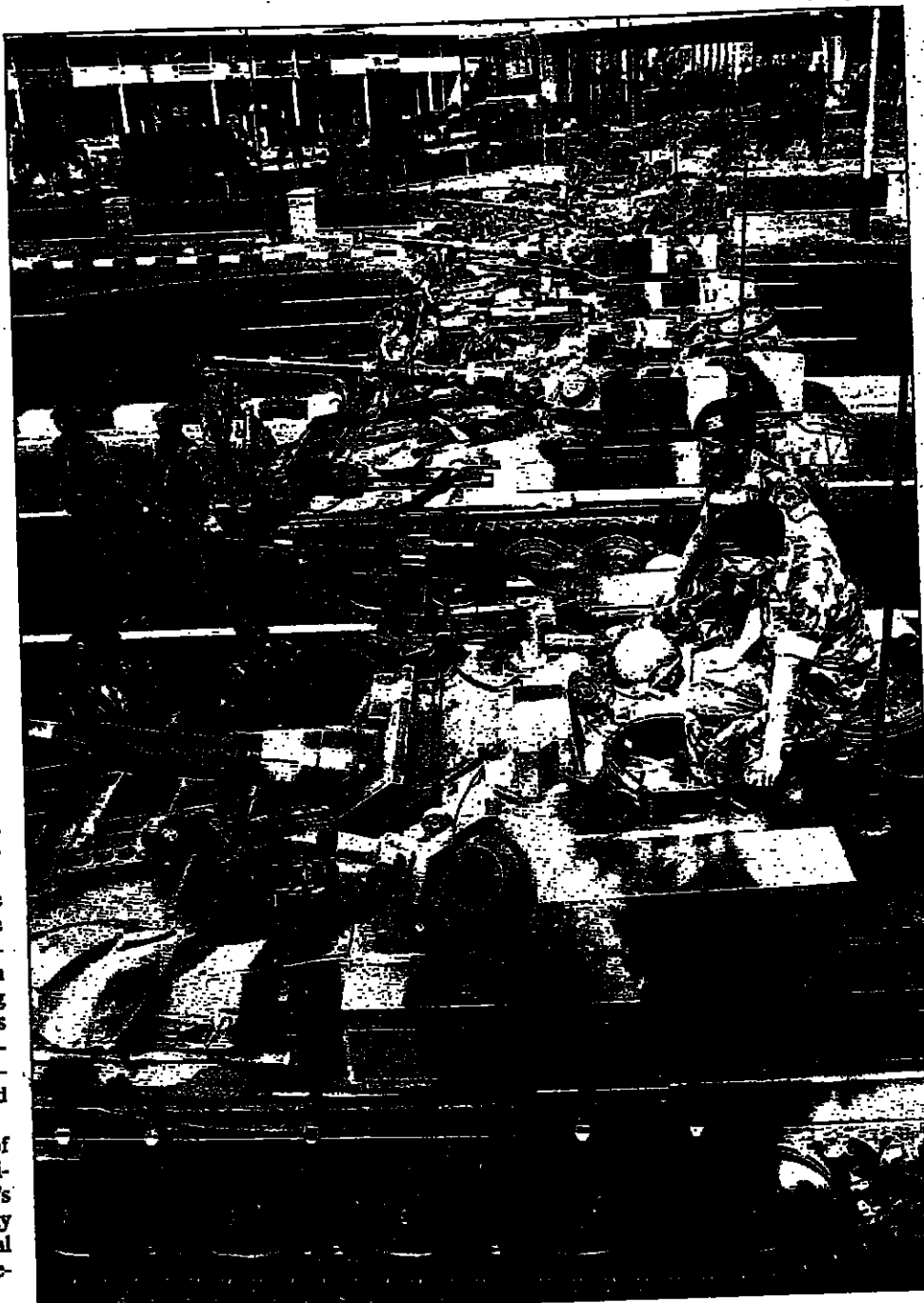
"Under the current system, the information is so vague, and the categories so broad that it's very difficult to tell what exactly is being exported," says Andy McLean, of the Saferworld foreign affairs research group.

"For instance, in one case, equipment was listed under category ML7, defined as 'riot control agents, and related equipment'. Then we were told the licence was for power-station boiler suits."

The hope now is that the Government will realise the political damage of not revealing the full truth in a situation like Indonesia - merely fanning the suspicion that Mr Cook's ethical foreign policy of denying arms of repression to undemocratic regimes is honoured in the breach.

But many opponents of arms exports argue that ambiguities such as those in Britain's dealings with Indonesia only strengthen the case for a total ban on weapons sales to repressive regimes.

Britain is now second only to the United States as a global arms exporter.



A line of British-made Scorpion tanks blocking a main road in Jakarta yesterday, all manned by soldiers with British-style uniforms and guns. Photograph: Muchtar Zakaria/AP

## Chinatown counts the cost of mob's racist vendetta

By Stephen Vines  
in Jakarta

SCAVENGERS were out yesterday, picking their way through the charred ruins of the City hotel in the heart of Jakarta's Chinatown. They were among the few residents who got something positive from the carnage wrought on this area, which was torched during last week's riots.

A man dangling an iron bar, who says he is a security guard at the hotel, thinks the Chinese part-owners of the hotel have fled to Singapore.

"It's very bad for the Chinese," he remarks with what sounds like a certain satisfaction. "Two Chinese hanged themselves after their shops were looted and they were bankrupt."

Having just about survived last week's rampage, the Chinese in Glodok were nervously waiting to see what would happen in the wake of yesterday's expected massive demonstration in the capital. When it failed to materialise, a collective wave of relief swept through Chinatown.

In the courtyard of the Dharma Bhakti Chinese Temple a group of middle-aged and elderly Chinese are buddled around a portable radio listening intently to the BBC's Mandarin Chinese news.

"Of course we're afraid," says the man holding the radio. "It could happen again." He would not give his name. "It's too dangerous."

They are wary of a foreign reporter, even though I live in Hong Kong. "Do you speak Cantonese?" asks a man who has hitherto been silent. We continue in faltering Cantonese and then the atmosphere lifts.

The Chinese have worked so hard to become Indonesian but once again they are being turned into aliens in their own home.

While a great political reform movement grips the country they provide an outlet for the mobs who have been swept into the movement but who use it to vent their frustration about being poor. Though they make up only about 3 per cent of the population, the Chinese are still a focus for anger.

To the poor who calmly

plundered their shops, they are a soft target among the rich who have exploited them.

Like most of the city's ethnic Chinese, the group at the temple own small businesses. All of these businesses were burned down or looted last week.

I ask one man how much he has lost. "I can't tell you. I never think about the loss," he replies. "The only important thing is that I'm safe."

Outside the temple a young Chinese man, who identifies himself as Tony, says he worked for an electronics shop which was torched, leaving the remainder of the stock to be cleaned out by looters.

"We lost maybe a trillion," he says, referring to the sum of money calculated in Indonesia's fast-shrinking currency. In sterling terms this translates to a low six-figure amount.

Tony has no idea when he

Once again the  
Chinese are  
being turned into  
aliens in their  
own home

will get back to work, or if the electronics shop will ever reopen.

His friends lounging around him nodded their heads with an air of resignation. They, too, have seen their workplaces burned to the ground.

"I don't know how we're going to recover," said one man. "I just pray to God and hope."

Across the city in the middle-class Pluit district, which is predominantly Chinese, the atmosphere is very different. There are no burnt-out buildings or piles of broken glass from smashed windows.

"We had no looting here," says the manager of the Singapore restaurant, "the only problem was some theft from houses of people who have fled."

The residents of Pluit have sealed off their area with makeshift barricades. At the entrances stand groups of stick-bearing local vigilantes accompanied by police and soldiers. It is safety of a kind, but not security.

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## 15/INDONESIA CRISIS

# Martial law descends on Freedom Square

By Richard Lloyd Parry and Stephen Vines, in Jakarta

JAKARTA was gripped by an atmosphere of undeclared martial law yesterday, after the army threatened Indonesia's leading opposition leader with a repeat of the Tiananmen Square massacre if he pressed on with a mass demonstration in the city centre.

The clampdown, involving 40,000 armed troops, came a day after President Suharto responded to months of protest by promising political reforms.

In a dawn television address yesterday, Amien Rais, the Muslim academic who has become the focus of popular protest against Suharto, cancelled the demonstration which he had called and appealed to his followers to stay at home. "Last night someone told me—

who happens to be an army general—that he doesn't care at all if a Tiananmen incident will take place today in Jakarta," he said. "I was so shocked to hear this."

In the old capital of Yogyakarta, the Sultan of the city led half a million people in a peaceful rally in front of his palace, and another 200,000 protesters staged peaceful demonstrations in other cities. In Jakarta, protests were confined to the parliament building which has been taken over by thousands of university students.

Freedom Square, where the cancelled demonstration was supposed to have taken place, was completely sealed off with barricades of wood and barbed wire. Troops patrolled in Land Rovers, armoured cars, helicopters and tanks were posi-

tioned on flyovers, roundabouts, and in front of the big hotels and embassies.

"I don't want anybody to die just to force Suharto to step down," Dr Rais told a press conference later in the day. He admitted the climbdown over the demonstration was "a setback" but insisted the power of the people on the streets could be unleashed again if the President refused to leave in a constitutional manner.

On Tuesday, in an attempt to defuse increasingly vociferous demands for his resignation, the President announced he would leave office after holding national elections, though the date for these polls was not specified.

The protesters are demanding his immediate resignation. At the parliament building, waves of jubilant stu-

dents flooded in during the day to reinforce their colleagues already in the building.

The leaders of Suharto's own party, Golkar, yesterday repeated their hope that the President will resign voluntarily at a special session of the People's Consultative Assembly. "The President has decided that his legitimacy has declined and cannot be revived," the Indonesian environment minister, Juswono Sudarsono, told *The Independent* yesterday. "What he wants from the leadership of the armed forces is a dignified exit."

In Jakarta, many protesters are calling for the President to be hanged and were in no mood for compromise. But his aides are talking about the possibility of elections next January, and a new president by March.



Muslim university student protesting outside Parliament House in Jakarta yesterday

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## Tiananmen: the forbidden word

By Richard Lloyd Parry and Stephen Vines

ILL WEEK, as the tanks and moured cars have ferried their cargoes of soldiers backwards and forwards around Jakarta, a nagging question has kept coming to mind: what does this scene recall?

A huge and monumental public square; students carrying placards calling for democracy; tanks trundling along broad city streets. It was Amien Rais, the Muslim opposition leader, who put it into words in his dawn television address yesterday as he called off the huge demonstrations scheduled for yesterday. "Last night someone told me—who happens to be an army general—that he doesn't care if a Tiananmen incident takes place today."

Could the army massacre of pro-democracy protesters which took place in Peking's Tiananmen Square in 1989 happen here? Would the Indonesian armed forces fire upon their own people in Jakarta?

The truth is they already have. The current wave of unrest started when six students were shot dead last week by snipers stationed on a flyover after a peaceful demonstration. Since then, the military has shown surprising restraint. Despite the sinister appearance of

machines of war on city streets, and the overwhelming presence of 78,000 troops yesterday, the most active duty in which the troops were engaged yesterday was directing the traffic.

In person, the soldiers are friendly and direct. Unlike the police, the Indonesian armed forces, known by the acronym of Abri, is a source of genuine pride to many Indonesians, and Abri's own propaganda emphasises that its members are the servants of the people.

But these are testing times. "I tell my men to be patient and not to be provoked," said one officer, "but I have some hard feelings when I hear the crowd chanting 'Hang Suharto'."

After decades of suppression, Abri is the only institution in Indonesia which rivals the power of the president. But, as members of the government admit, it is divided between the commander, General Wiranto, and President Suharto's son-in-law, Lieutenant-General Prabowo.

This rivalry may be dangerous. The most frightening scenario was spelled out by President Suharto himself—further bloodshed, leading to war between factions in a divided army. "They remain two very strong possibilities," said Juswono Sudarsono, a minister with close links to the military.

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# Satellite failure leaves America speechless

**By David Usborne**  
*in New York*

**THEY SAY** you take the conveniences of modern life for granted until they are taken away from you. Yesterday, millions of Americans found it to be true, when a satellite parked 22,000 miles above the equator went on the blink, disabling communications from coast to coast.

By some estimates, as many as 90 per cent of all pager owners in the United States woke up yesterday to discover that their trusty gizmos had become useless.

There were other problems too: television networks could not send programmes to affiliates, weather forecasters found themselves bereft of radar data and even some petrol stations improvised as credit card readers in automatic pumps failed to function.

It all began late on Tuesday, when the *Galaxy 4* satellite, owned by PanAmSat of Connecticut, suffered a general systems breakdown that made it suddenly tilt away from Earth. Information that it was meant to be relaying back to Earth instead started being reflected into space.

The pager industry bore the brunt of the breakdown, with about 45 million customers affected. And

while pagers, or beepers, may be little more than fashion accessories for some, for many others, such as doctors and emergency workers, they have become a vital tool.

"This is the first time in 35 years that pagers have gone silent," lamented John Beletic, chairman of one of the affected pager companies, PageMart Wireless Inc. He and others in the industry had to decide

**'This is the first time in 35 years that pagers have gone silent'**

whether to switch services to other satellites, which would take at least a day, or wait until Galaxy 4 was fixed. And at PanAmSat's headquarters, in Greenwich, a repairs timetable seemed unsure.

Launched by Europe's Ariane space programme in June 1993, Galaxy 4 is positioned to provide *communications coverage to most of the United States and the Caribbean.*

By late morning, PanAmSat was reporting that some pager services

were being restored through alternative satellites with spare capacity. "We are starting to migrate the traffic from Galaxy 4 to another satellite," said Dan Marcus, a spokesman for the company.

Hospitals, meanwhile, were filled with the racket of doctors being summoned in the old-fashioned way, via public address systems. Among the millions of medical workers inconvenienced was Dr Steve Dickens, a cardiologist at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles. He had to spend the night at the hospital to avoid being out of reach. "I have to tell people what to do and how to respond," he said.

At the New York University Medical Center, Dr Stuart Lewis said he did not realise his beeper was inactive until somebody from work telephoned him early yesterday to warn him. "It's shocking, frankly. I feel like I'm untethered. I think I am going to be running up the bill on my cellphone today."

Hardest hit in the television industry was CBS, which found itself struggling to feed programmes to affiliates around the country in time for their broadcast. The company eventually found space on an alternative satellite. CNN was forced to close down its Airport Network yesterday because of the problems.



Retired Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu standing below a billboard of himself during a ceremony in Cape Town at which he was granted freedom of the city Photograph: AP

# Clinton hits trouble with smoking bill

**By Andrew Marshall**  
in Washington

A UNITED States initiative to prevent teenage smoking by hiking prices and restricting sales has hit obstacles, prompting President Bill Clinton to make a high-profile appearance to boost its chances.

The President pleaded with Congress not to miss a "historic" opportunity to tackle tobacco. He was joined by Olympic skater Tara Lipinski, who led a rally of hundreds of youngsters on the White House south lawn. The message was intended to be clear: If anyone smokes this deal, they are hurting children.

The US Senate is debating a bill that would increase the price of a pack of cigarettes by \$1.10, up from an average price of about \$2, force tobacco companies to make public their research, restrict advertising, allow the government to regulate nicotine as a drug, and levy fines of up to \$3.5n (\$2.2bn) a year on the industry if youth smoking does not drop sufficiently. As a quid pro quo, it would also cap the amount of damages which tobacco companies would be forced to pay at \$6.5bn. The bill would cost tobacco companies about \$520bn over 25 years.

Few senators want to appear opposed to the legislation. Yet many have concerns, which are complicating the fight to get a bill passed before Congress goes into recess at the end of this week. The first fights have erupted over potential beneficiaries: lawyers. One estimate says lawyers could make \$480 a year from settling lawsuits under the deal, and the Republicans want a cap on their cash

"There's just so much wrong with this bill, there isn't enough time to fix it this week," said its chief opponent, Don Nickles, a Republican of Oklahoma.

# Protest cripples Siberian railway

**By Phil Reeves**  
in Moscow

**THE** new government of Boris Yeltsin is facing its most severe challenge so far as industrial protests ripple across Russia, led by the coal miners, who have cut the country in half by blocking the Trans-Siberian railway. Hundreds of trains were at a halt in different parts of the country yesterday as angry miners - whose industrial muscle helped oust Mikhail Gorbachev from power in 1991 - sat on the tracks in a protest against six-month pay delays and sweeping pit closures.

The government, led by the recently appointed 35-year-old Prime Minister, Sergei Kiriyenko, has set up an emergency centre in Moscow, solely devoted to dealing with the miners' protest. Yesterday he met with trade union leaders and emphasised the need for a negotiated solution.

Industrial protests are common in Russia as it grapples with the transition to a market economy but the latest are attracting more attention than most. The Railways Ministry said 296 freight trains and 120 passenger trains were held up in three main areas - the south near Rostov, the line to Vorkuta in the Arctic, and around the Kemerovo region in Siberia.

In the latter, the governor, Aman Tuleyev, declared a state of emergency in the Kuzbass coalfield because all rail access to the area was cut off. He warned that some stranded trains carried chemicals and explosives.

Protests have been bubbling away for some time. Several months ago, Siberian miners took their bosses hostage. The protests have gained momentum in recent days, widening to include teachers, who marched in Moscow yesterday, and students in St Petersburg. Doctors, pensioners, scientists and teachers have joined miners on their sit-ins.

The most publicised protest has been on the Trans-Siberian, the world's longest railway line, at Prokopyevsk in Kemerovo, half-way between Russia's Pacific and Baltic coasts. Yesterday protesters cut off a track that had been used to bypass sit-ins, closing down the line altogether, severing Russia's east-west rail artery.

Earlier this month Boris Yeltsin pledged to ensure that all the miners would be paid. But he has been burdened by a tranche of economic problems. The government maintains a large part of the problem is the failure – or inability – of commercial clients to pay the mines for their coal.

## IN BRIEF

## Swiss protest

**THE** Swiss government said it will file a protest with the United States over New Jersey legislation to punish Swiss banks over Second World War assets. A spokesman said the ruling cabinet, or Federal Council, would take further steps if the legislation, approved on Monday by the New Jersey Assembly, also passes the Senate and is signed into law by the Governor.

— AP Bern

## Sarajevo flight

**THE** Yugoslav flag-carrier, Jugoslovenski Aerotransport, said yesterday that it would start flying to the Bosnian capital Sarajevo on 24 May on a sector to be operated jointly with Air Bosnia. The first flight from Sarajevo to Belgrade since the outbreak of the Bosnian war in 1992 will be made by Air Bosnia today.

— Reuters, Belgrade

## Castro claim

CUBAN leader Fidel Castro, 71, said yesterday that there was no chance that his 39-year Communist rule would come to an end through the type of protests that are threatening to bring down Indonesia's President Suharto. "I am in charge because [Cubans] want me to stay there," he said. "We will have a smooth transition in Cuba."

— Reuters, Geneva

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Big business may be behind Lisbon's Expo98 but there is also environmental concern. Elizabeth Nash reports



Street performers lining up their props as they prepare to entertain the expected long queues for Lisbon's Expo98, which opens today

Photograph: AP

## Yugoslavia's new PM takes on reformists

**BELGRADE (Reuters)** — Yugoslavia's new Prime Minister, Momir Bulatovic, took office yesterday, spilling for a fight with reformist leaders of the Montenegrin republic who vowed to boycott his government.

Mr Bulatovic, a close ally of Yugoslavia's President Slobodan Milosevic, was ratified without opposition in the two federal parliament chambers, but his Montenegrin opponents were absent from the voting.

Montenegrin reformers, led by the small republic's President Milo Djukanovic, warned that Mr Bulatovic's appointment would put Serbia and Montenegro on a collision course that could destroy the Yugoslav federation, in which the two republics are supposed to be equal partners.

Mr Djukanovic blames President Milosevic's domination of Serbia, which dwarfs Montenegro economically, for Yugoslavia's international economic and diplomatic isolation.

The crux of the crisis between the two republics is over whether Yugoslavia should become the modern, market-driven democratic state envisioned by Mr Djukanovic or remain under the sway of the former communists who have held a monopoly of power for more than 50 years.

The reformers said Mr Milosevic handed Mr Bulatovic the prestige and power of his federal post in order to sway Montenegro's parliamentary elections on 31 May in his ally's favour. Mr Djukanovic, who defeated Mr Bulatovic for the Montenegrin presidency last year, is fighting to retain control of the parliament which provides him with powerful constitutional weapons with which to wage his war against Mr Milosevic.

Mr Bulatovic said his government would work on the creation of a unified Yugoslav economy. Political sources said this was a threat to attack efforts by Mr Djukanovic to liberalise in Montenegro, which has an active privatisation programme.

## Portugal sets sail for virtual future

THE last world's fair this millennium opens in Lisbon today, 500 years after the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama pioneered the sea route to India. His feat revolutionised Europe's commercial history and inspired Expo98's theme of "The Oceans", in which the predatory legacy of global expansion is muted by an eco-friendly message of protecting the world's seas.

The Expo site occupies perhaps the finest river-front in Europe: a five-kilometre stretch of Tagus shoreline triumphantly reclaimed from a sinking wasteland. The transformation into an ensemble of creamy, world-class buildings, a mosaic of riverside promenades suffused with pearly sunshine, and a battery of virtual-reality technology is one of Portugal's most ambitious achievements since those big black cargo ships set sail from Lisbon 500 years ago.

Like Barcelona during the 1992 Olympics, Lisbon decided that the £1.5bn Expo would both put Portugal on the map and rejuvenate the capital's abandoned maritime heart.

Flats, offices, conference centres and concert halls, gardens and galleries, and a sensational bus and train station designed by a Spanish architect,

Santiago Calatrava, all point to the formation of a real urban community after the fair ends on 30 September.

Displays from more than 150 countries are housed in modest hangar-like pavilions supplied by the Portuguese. Half will be dismantled, while the rest will become a permanent exhibition space for trade fairs. The pavilions' uniformity has prompted invention by the exhibitors. The Finns have an icebreaker carving through an icy expanse in which mobile phones, beer bottles and other Finnish products are trapped. Skates will be provided, and the scene is observed by the world's oldest diving suit, a 210-year-old leather all-in-one.

France and the United States have opted for interactive special effects about marine technology. Sweden recreates its seasons in four interconnecting eggs. Holland has you walking over ridged sandy polders and Croatia sends you walking on water, as waves ripple beneath the glass under your feet.

As the 1900 Paris exhibition launched the escalator, Expo98 offers the latest in virtual reality technology. Portugal's Futures Pavilion has a multi-media video of the world's oceans through the eyes of a child. The

message is simple eco-correctness: we must protect our aquatic heritage from exhaust fumes and acid rain. Alas, the toddler not merely wears a nappy on his voyage, but a plastic one.

The jewel in Expo's crown is undoubtedly the Oceanarium, the biggest in Europe. Grouped around a vast tank 7m high and 35m square, the world's principal marine habitats — the Atlantic, Indian, Antarctic and Pacific — have been recreated and stocked with 250 species of animals, birds and sea creatures. The rocks are cement and the coral is fake, but the sharks are real.

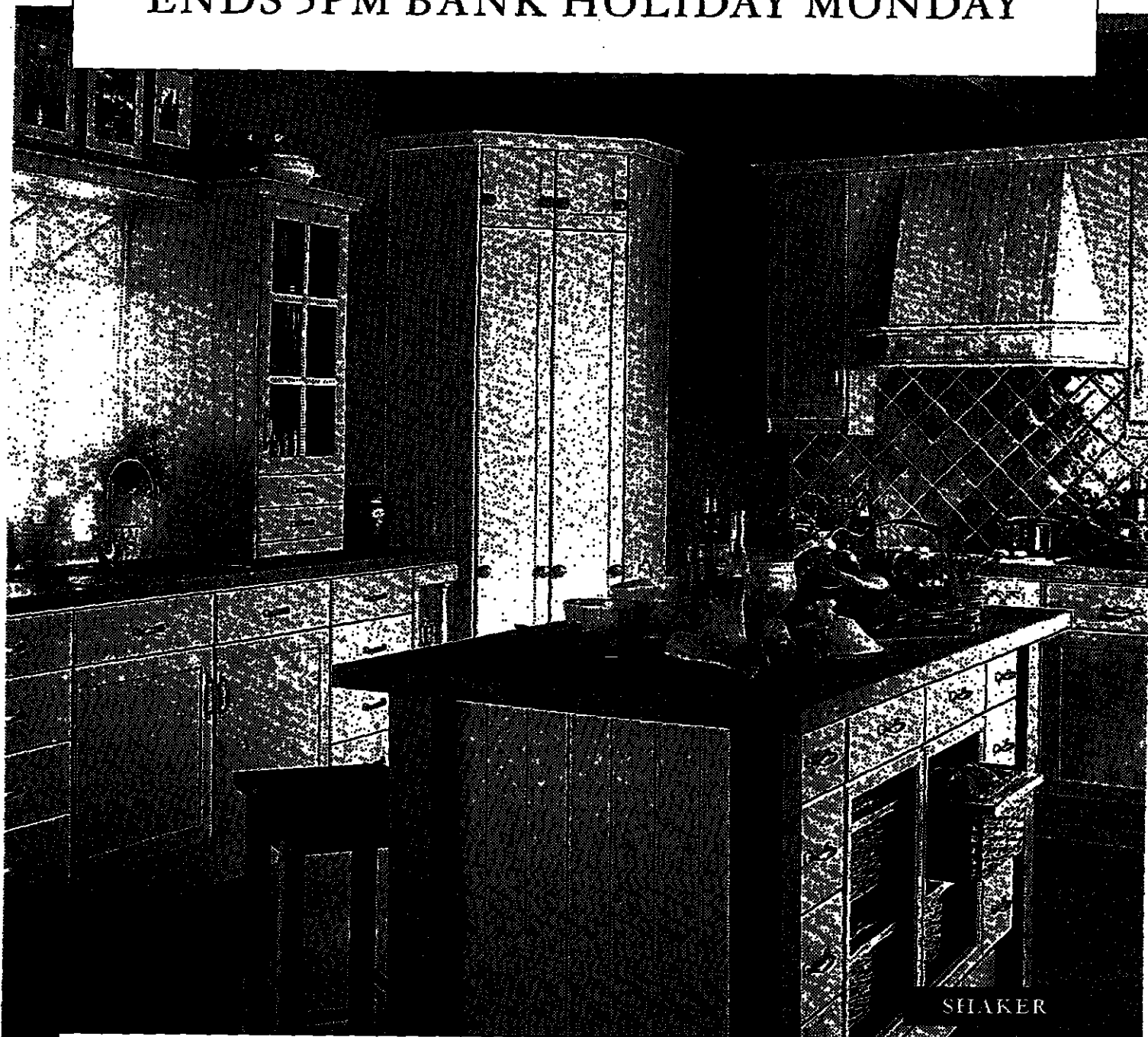
"The big challenge was to put the four oceans in one tank," says Peter Chernyayeff, an American architect, "to separate the habitats by invisible acrylic walls and bring them together visually in the centre. There's a poetic licence that makes the point about the unity of the global system."

Expo98's mix of spectacle, culture and commercialism ranges from the sublime to the banal. The most successful offerings bring a light touch to appeal to up to nine million fun-seeking visitors. Those who cannot make it, or who quail at the prospect of queuing for hours, can take heart that the best may survive beyond September.

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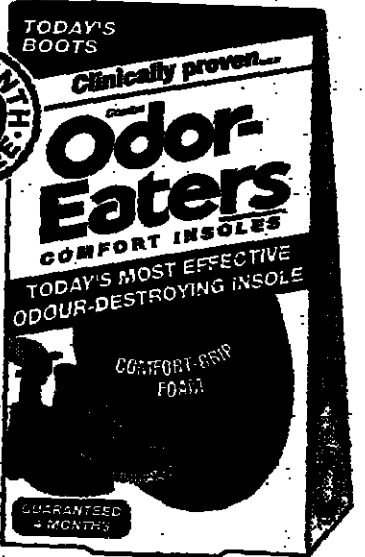
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# 'My daughter worked for a newspaper in Africa. She dared to tell the truth. Now she may end up behind bars'

By Hunter Davies

WE'VE just returned from two weeks in Botswana, lovely country, lovely people, where we were visiting Caitlin, our elder daughter. Things are not so lovely for her. On 25 May, she will appear in a court on a charge which could lead to a two-year prison sentence.

It was a strange feeling, as we flew home, picking up newspapers I'd never heard of before in Botswana and South Africa, seeing her name in leaders and news reports, all defending our Caitlin, saying what a disgrace, how could it have happened to Caitlin Davis. Yes, very often they did spell her surname wrong. I've gone through life with that happening, but never, so far, had my name in a newspaper because I've been arrested.

Caitlin is 34 - though it says in the charge sheet I have in front of me she is 31, so that's the first mistake. She went to Camden School in London, Sussex University, then did a Master's degree at Clark in Massachusetts. There she met Ronald Ridge from Botswana, born in a *rondavel*, a thatched and mud hut with sand on the floor. Through natural brilliance and hard work he'd gone from local village schools to the University of Botswana in Gaborone, the capital. Thence to Clark, taking a degree in computer sciences, something Botswana was unable to offer at the time. They fell in love, moved to Botswana, they got married.

That was eight years ago. Happy ever after, oh yes. She absolutely adores Botswana. Only last year, after endless bureaucratic delays, she became a citizen.

At first she taught in Maun, Ronald's home village, on a British Council scheme for teachers. Then when he got a



Caitlin Devoted to her adopted homeland

job elsewhere in Botswana, in the salt pans, she started freelance journalism. They returned to Maun in 1995 and she became editor of the local newspaper, the *Okavango Observer*. Not exactly Fleet Street, but I was jolly pleased. The first, and probably only one of our three children to show a real interest in writing.

This was when her problems began. In her first issue as editor, on 29 September 1995, she ran a front-page story about a gang of youths terrorising Maun. Similar stories had appeared in the past by the same reporter, but she asked a reporter who normally dealt with the police to get their reaction. The local station commander could neither confirm nor deny the latest incidents, as nothing had been reported to the police. So the story was sprinkled with the occasional "allegedly".

On 19 January 1996, a CID officer came to the offices of the *Okavango Observer*, told Caitlin she was under arrest, invited her to the police station. The charge, when eventually given, was publishing "a false report... which was likely to cause fear and alarm to the public". This is contrary to Section 59 of the Penal Code, which, apparently has never been invoked before.

The Media Institute of



Southern Africa, based in Namibia, investigated the case and she was interviewed by Amnesty International. All promised support to help fight her case. In the event, nothing happened. Silence for about a year. It was presumed it had all been forgotten, or had been a joke. Then, in December 1997 she was called before the magistrate's court in Maun. There have been six appearances since then, but so far she has not been tried, mainly because of legal mix-ups and the prosecution not turning up.

The reason she has had such support from the African media and various freedom groups is that they are amazed that such a thing could happen in Botswana. It has been independent since 1966, yet managed to be a pillar of freedom, equality and peace in a continent not normally known for such virtues.

"Botswana is greatly admired throughout Africa," says Caitlin. "Our neighbours like Zimbabwe think we are so lucky, with free education and free health care. There is peace

here between the tribes and the people are justifiably proud of their tradition of democracy and freedom of speech."

Caitlin herself has been totally welcomed into the local community and accepted by Ronald's family, including his mother and grandmother. They speak Setswana (which Caitlin herself has learned), not English. Both have been ill with worry on Caitlin's behalf. Her own life has been disrupted, with expensive trips to Gaborone to see lawyers and supporters, endless delays and

uncertainties. She has also had an anonymous phone call, telling her to leave the country.

The *Okavango Observer* has recently ceased publishing, for financial, not political reasons, and Caitlin has been freelancing and writing. Her first novel, *Jamstown Blues*, has been published by Penguin and got good reviews, including three in the UK, which of course I have framed on my wall. It's set in Botswana, but is not autobiographical, written in the first person by a 13-year-old girl. One reviewer recom-

mended it be put on the national school syllabus.

So why is she being charged? Why is someone or somebody out to get her, after it looked as if the case had been dropped? A leader on 7 May in *Mmegi*, Botswana's largest independent weekly, suggested it was victimisation. "Literally everyone in Maun knew that a gang of boys terrorised the village. The state claims the report caused alarm. Doesn't this just show how petty and vindictive the state can be?"

The real problem, so some

Children of the Kalahari bush tribes. It is thought that Caitlin's coverage (below) of the Botswana government's forced resettlement of the tribes was what led the authorities to pursue a prosecution. Photograph: Chris Steele-Perkins/Magnum



other papers believe, was caused when Caitlin went on to produce a series of articles drawing attention to the Government's unpopular removal of indigenous Bushmen from the Kalahari. Caitlin initially expected these stories to be of purely local interest, but they received worldwide attention. Prince Charles got involved. There were questions in the House of Lords.

Caitlin herself can hardly believe this is the reason, pointing to all the nice stories she also ran about Botswana's handling of its environment and tourism and its achievements in the fields of health, literacy and women's rights.

Ronald, her husband, has his own theory. "The people of Botswana have been brought up, as I was, to respect our elders, especially the men. They ate first, got the best food. The Government in turn believes like elders, looking upon the population as children, who should do as they are told. So they can't believe that someone as young as Caitlin should write these things - embarrassing them in front of the world." Let's hope the authorities will respond favourably on 25 May - a big day for our family anyway. It's my wife's 60th birthday. Fingers crossed for a happy birthday present.

This article also appears in this week's *New Statesman*

## DILEMMAS

### Take your cat on holiday with you - he'll have the time of his life



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Mandy's taken a house in the country for a month, but doesn't know what to do with her dependent cat. Should she take him with her and risk him running away, leave him at home with someone popping in to feed him, or put him in a cattery?

EVER since Rudyard Kipling wrote *The Cat who Walked by Himself*, a myth has grown up that cats are cool, independent characters, the sort who, were they human, would wear mirrored shades. But the truth is that most cats are tremendously dependent and pathetically fond of their owners. Whenever I so much so open the cupboard under the stairs to get out my suitcase, my cat, Corky, is yowling around me, purring and nuzzling me, anything to persuade me to stay at home. He then, rather sadly, sleeps on my head, hoping this will effectively stop me getting up to catch the train.

Most cats crave company, but whether it's your company they crave or any old company is doubtful. That's why I'd say Mandy should definitely not leave her cat to be fed by a stranger every day. If she has to leave him, she should get a cat-lover to come and live in the house and give her puss several strokes and cuddles a day. A cattery hardly seems an op-

tion, because most cats are effectively kept in small prisons with tiny runs that make them feel miserable. At a risk of anthropomorphising, how could Mandy feel pity and sympathy for Terry Waite or John McCarthy, which I assume she did, and subject her own cat to just the same appalling stresses - imprisonment in small space, lack of stimulation, and no idea when it will ever be let out? If one year is seven cat years, one month is seven cat months, and it's a hell of a long time to be left by yourself with no idea when or if you'll ever be released.

When I'd left a cat of mine at a cattery he was so pleased to see me on his release that he suddenly started to moulit all over me, as if he'd been so scared he'd been unable to let so much as a hair free when he'd been in captivity. When we got home I looked like one of his relations, whiskers and all. I think Mandy should take the cat with her. Cats adore the country, and why shouldn't the cat have a holiday alongside its

family? If she keeps a good eye on him in the garden for the first few trips out, he's unlikely to stray - he'll be as frightened as her of getting lost - and he'll thoroughly enjoy a rich supply of new birds, shrews, mice and general wriggly, scampering and crawling things.

Whenever you take on an animal or even a plant - yes, I go that far - you take on responsibility for its happiness and welfare. Living things are not there to be abused or treated like inanimate possessions. "A dog is not for Christmas" but nor is a hamster, a budgie or a cat.

This responsibility is the tremendous curse of owning animals. If you take them on, sometimes you have to sacrifice your own wishes or compromise, in order to fulfil the function of caring owner. Sometimes, when they are terminally ill, you may have to have them killed. You are mother, father and God to a dependent animal, and if Mandy can't bear to take her cat away with her then maybe she should cut her holi-

day down to a couple of weeks. The cat's welfare is far more important than a month's holiday, and if she doesn't feel like this about her cat I really don't think she ought to own one.

Blasphemy! Not me. But I've just got to rush home to Corky.

#### WHAT READERS SAY

Of course you must take your cat with you. A house in the country for a month! He'll have a lovely time. He won't get lost. He will know you are living there. Cats are very bright, they take in situations quickly.

Over the past 13 years I have stayed in an old mill in the Lake District for two weeks every year. I have taken four different cats with me - they have all got back safely. Just be a bit careful the day you leave. You may have to confine him while you pack up or he might be off hunting just as you are ready to go. — Wendy Burton

Mandy should take her cat with her, making sure he/she wears a collar with an identity tag with both home and away phone numbers. Also carried in a properly secure cage or basket. A month is a long time to leave an affectionate and dependent cat, even with the attention of kindly neighbours or in a cattery. — Diana Chapman

Take your cat with you. We took all our cats (one at a time!) with us from when they were

kittens, camping even. Apart from them depositing samples of the local shrew population at the feet of our sleeping bags each night, a good time was had by all. — Gaynor Darbishire

I have cat-sat on many occasions. On every occasion, no matter how reclusive a cat was reputed to be, after a couple of days it has become obvious that they were desperate for human company and wanting someone in the house.

#### NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

My mother-in-law is spending a few days with us on our fortnight's holiday. True, she can't stop talking, but I get along quite well with her. I can see she might annoy people but it all washes over me and she's good at heart.

My husband, however, just can't stand her. He feels it's our duty to have her along. And he's forever sighing and snapping at her. She doesn't seem to mind as much as I do, but I can't bear to see him making frightful faces behind her back, not replying to her and behaving intolerably rudely. The result, unless I

can change my husband's attitude, is that we'll have a dreadful holiday. — Daphne

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will receive a bouquet from *Interflora*.

Send comments and suggestions to Virginia Ironside at Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax 0171-293 2182), by Tuesday morning. If you have a dilemma of your own that you would like to share, please let me know.



# Is Auschwitz a laughing matter?

The Holocaust remains a taboo subject, yet this week a filmmaker has



regaled Cannes with his black comedy based on the lives of victims of the Nazis. Howard Jacobson asks whether there will ever be a time

when comedy can draw the poison out of so many embittered hearts



Scenes from 'My Life Is Beautiful' by Roberto Benigni (above right) which has sent shockwaves through the Cannes Festival with its comic treatment of Holocaust victims

"IF YOU could lick my heart," said one of the Holocaust survivors in Claude Lanzmann's film, *Shoah*, "it would poison you."

How long should one give oneself to let that sink in? Forever?

Is there anything thereafter to say? The rest is silence, surely. The silence that drowns out all other sounds.

God's name was once considered too terrible to utter. In our time we drop God's name without thinking twice about it, but woe betide the man who speaks the holy word "Holocaust" in vain. "To write poetry after Auschwitz," Adorno famously remarked, "is barbaric." And that's poetry, the most reverend of all forms of expression. So as for joking about the Holocaust!

But what good is served by taking a poisonous heart into eternity? Memory is served by it, we are told. We must never forget. And as long as our hearts taste like ratsbane we will never forget. Which begs the question of what sort of memory is best for us, best helps us to understand, best helps us to commemorate, and best helps us to live.

In an essay in Geoffrey Hartmann's *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, Saul Friedlander notes the absence, in the Jewish world, of

any redeeming myth in the wake of the Holocaust: "... some 50 years after the events, no mythical framework seems to be taking hold of the Jewish imagination, nor does the best of literature and art dealing with the Shoah offer any redemptive stance. In fact the opposite appears to be true."

Of course it's possible that it's still too soon for redemptive myths. The function of a redemptive myth is to turn memory into a necessary form of forgetting. After only 50 years – a mere flea-bite in time – we may not be ready for that cruel but sustaining paradox. Remember in order to forget? Forget in order to remember? Yes, but how could we forget these?

Through what power, even for the least division of an hour, could we be so beguiled as to be blind to our most grievous loss...?

And if it's too soon for the myths, mustn't it follow that it's certainly too soon for the jokes. In Thurber's formula, "TRAGEDY + TIME = COMEDY". We've had the Holocaust, what we haven't had is the time.

False algebra, I think. I don't subscribe to the argument that comedy must always wait its turn, be kept cooling its heels in the ante-room of tragedy, so to speak, at a dignified distance

from where the real business of tribulation is taking place; for by shutting comedy out all we do is deprive ourselves of the good comedy can do us.

It's now that we need the transformative beneficence of comedy, not in 500 years, when the Holocaust will have become a sort of allegory anyway.

Behind the outrage that someone has dared to make a comic film on a Holocaust-related subject lies in an understandable objection to levity in a hallowed place. I have no taste for levity myself, in any place.

We are dying of lightness. But comedy and levity are, by no means the same thing; there is no more reason to assume that a comedy will be light-hearted than that a work in which there is no comedy will be truly serious.

It may be the case for all I know – for no one sent me to Cannes to see it – that Roberto Benigni's *My Life Is Beautiful* is trivial, footling in the manner of *Blackadder* or *'Ella 'Ella*. In which case that would be the objection – that it is of no consequence, not that it is comic. For my money there was

an absence of proper moral weight in *Schindler's List*. And that certainly wasn't owing to his comic inclinations, since Spielberg has no comic inclinations.

There are some cultures in which it would not be necessary to make this apology for comedy. Outside the Judaeo-Christian tradition – and you can't get more Judaeo-Christian than the Holocaust – the comic and the sacred, let alone the comic and the merely serious, are not taken to be mutually exclusive.

Wherever Jews and Christians are not, clowns perform sacred functions, enjoy holy of-

fice, officiate in the breaking of the strictest of taboos, defy every decency owing to the living and the dead, overturn the normal order and appearance of things, thereby revivifying the senses and replenishing hope.

Since comedy has the power to disarrange the visible world and reassemble it – in other words, since comedy can be visionary – it makes no sense to shoo it away from suffering and confine it to the sphere of light entertainment. Its province is pain and trouble. Affliction is where it feeds. Why send an ambulance to a house where no-

body is ill? We know more about the way sick jokes and black comedy and gallows humour work than we often care to admit. No matter how bitter or bilious our laughter is, the sound it makes is invariably one of affirmation.

Laughter proclaims life, even in the face of death. Which is sometimes tactless of it. No wonder we fear it. It acknowledges out part in inhuman cruelty, demystifies inhumanity itself, and can even make some terrible self-preservative virtue of it, for no man is an angel only when he laughs.

But then nor is he only a beast, which is where the redemption comes in.

I'm not saying that I'm up to writing a redemptive comedy of the death camps myself, or that I know what one would look like, or that Benigni's film fits the bill. Only that we shouldn't, before the event, close down the very act of imagination which may be capable of removing the poison from our hearts.

Howard Jacobson's novel *No More Mister Nice Guy* has just been published by Jonathan Cape.

## When Marley wailed and a government trembled

Bono's onstage mediation this week evoked memories of Bob Marley's One Love Peace concert to unite Jamaica.

By Neil Spencer, who was in Kingston in 1978

WHEN Bono raised the hands of John Hume and David Trimble in unity on Tuesday night, it is hard to believe he didn't have in his mind the residual image of a similar concert from two decades ago. At the 1978 One Love Peace Concert in Kingston, Jamaica, Bob Marley declared an end to the murderous political rivalry between the country's two political parties by joining the hands of Prime Minister Michael Manley (the People's National Party, PNP) and his right-wing rival Edward Seaga (of the Jamaican Labour Party, the JLP) above his head.

As Marley danced around the stage and improvised lyrics to his hit "Jamming", he declared "We've got to unite". In front of the stage were the world's media, alongside the full weight of Jamaica's political establishment. At the sides of the stage lurked an unsavoury array of ghetto gunmen from opposite sides of the political divide, their weapons abandoned, temporarily, mingling with the cream of Jamaica's reggae musicians. Deeper back in the national stadium was everyone who had managed to hustle a ticket or sneak in. Inside and out, armed police

lined the barriers. While a blood-red full moon beamed down from the sultry Caribbean sky, Marley raised his hands in supplication to the higher forces which he evidently believed he was serving and a mixture of politicians, gunmen musicians and Rastafarian elders crowded the stage in celebration of the newly-won peace. It was an extraordinary moment in an extraordinary night. Long before Marley appeared on stage the atmosphere surrounding the concert had been building to a giddy, portentous intensity.

That spring Jamaica was in crisis. The country was on the point of bankruptcy, thanks mainly to Washington's intransigent attitude to Manley's socialist government. While guest workers from Cuba helped build hospitals, the shelves of the shops stayed empty. Down in the teeming ghettos of Kingston, rival gangs of ruthless gunmen – sponsored, however discreetly, by the rival political parties – murdered and intimidated the dirt poor "sufferers" of the city in the run-up to the general election. Gun law ruled.

The state of economic chaos and mur-

derous political intrigue was compounded by the apocalyptic strains of the Rastafarian religion which had swept through the island during the Seventies, attracting the young and the musicians in particular. Marley himself had graduated from local stardom to become an international figure, the first Third World superstar. His music, his dreadlocks and his espousal of his faith had turned the tiny Rasta cult into a

globally acknowledged force. Little wonder that he and the island's Rastas felt they were participating in some cosmic drama which had Jamaica at its epicentre.

In 1976 Marley's fame had seemed to take its toll when a group of gunmen had burst into his Kingston home and shot him, his manager and his wife. That no-one died was taken as further proof of divine providence. Since then the singer – the Mighty

Gong as he was known among his followers – had been in exile. The Peace Concert marked his triumphant return.

Those attending were treated to a display by the best musicians the island had to offer; Dennis Brown, The Mighty Diamonds, Culture, Jacob Miller, Big Youth and more. Peter Tosh, Marley's old partner, caused a sensation when he interrupted his set to deliver a vitriolic tirade against the assembled politicians, haranguing them for their persecution of the poor for their fondness for ganja (marijuana).

As Tosh lit a huge spliff on stage, the police bristled with indignity.

By contrast Marley seemed not to be fully present. He delivered his set in a state of near trance, rarely opening his eyes, even as he pulled together the country's old political foes into uneasy embrace.

The concert was a huge success, dispelling the violence in the ghettos and making the small island nation the focus of world attention, yet it was to cast a disquieting shadow in the months and years ahead. The two leading gunmen involved – the JLP's Claude Massop and the PNP's Buck Marshall – were both shot dead before the decade was out, leading Tosh to make a

record in which he declared that "those who signed the Peace Treaty are now dead in the cemetery". Jacob Miller died in a car crash in 1980. Marley, the ghetto rude-boy who had become his country's most famous ambassador, died of cancer the following year. Peter Tosh was murdered in a hold-up at his home in 1987.

Nor did the peace last long. The run-up to the election, which was won by Edward Seaga, was marred by shooting incidents. As the world's cocaine trade boomed, Jamaica became a staging post, saturated with guns imported by Colombian gangsters or the CIA, depending on which rumour you believed.

It is tempting but foolish to draw any portents for Tuesday's Belfast Peace Show. Ulster is not the third world and Bono, though not averse to the odd religious lyric, is not Marley.

And while politics and guns have gone hand in hand in Ulster for the last 30 years, the present accord is politically agreed, rather than a grass-roots initiative supported by expedient politicians.

The real message of Tuesday's show is a reminder of pop's power to make symbolic interventions into political life.



Bob Marley embraces political rivals Michael Manley (left) and Edward Seaga Photograph: Adrian Boot

IN THE EYE TODAY:  
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## A tawdry story with no heroines

LUCILLE McLAUCHLAN and Deborah Parry are not heroines. It is not clear that they are victims. They may even be guilty of murder – that was, after all, the finding of a properly constituted Saudi court basing its judgment on an old and hallowed body of law. They say they were intimidated, invalidating the confessions they made. What is the balance of credibility? Too much uncertainty swirls around their story to allow any conclusion but this: red carpets, publicists, fat cheques and film scripts are entirely misplaced. Worse, they point to a growing national tendency in this country, exhibited most recently in the Louise Woodward au pair case, to prejudice foreign courts and substitute the wettest of sentiment for the dry-eyed pursuit of justice.

This is a story which does few of its participants much credit – except, possibly, King Fahd, whose exercise of royal prerogative on behalf of the nurses surely now qualifies him for the award of the Garter (which seems to be a flexible diplomatic resource these days). Dignity is missing in equal measure from the conduct of the murder victim's brother and the convicted nurses' families. The British administrative machine, including the Prime Minister, has been mobilised for the sake of two prisoners no more deserving of political attention than a score of others languishing in foreign jails. The British press is feeding frenziedly and once again the Press Complaints Commission's code of practice stands exposed as a rather flexible document.

It is what lies behind this tawdry saga that gives rise to deeper anxieties about our age. Since the 17th century Britons have gone overseas in large numbers to seek employment and adventure. Most have been prepared to play by the rules of the game. Commit an offence abroad and accept the judicial consequences. Only in egregious circumstances where, for example, foreign authorities have deliberately targeted British nationals or arrested citizens for political crimes did British governments get exercised. Now, however, a new mood is abroad. Young women – gender is an important part of it – arrested smuggling drugs into countries which are known across the globe for their restrictive laws suddenly get transformed into lionesses of the press and public and then a vote-hungry No 10 Downing Street gets on their case.

In the Saudi instance, prejudice has all along coloured responses. Of course, there are universal standards which should govern trial and the handling of prisoners: most people would agree that torture and execution are never justified. But in a diverse world, we must tolerate different systems of trial and incarceration. The Saudis are not the only objects of judicial chauvinism. The French have lately been portrayed as a nation along whose streets stumble serial killers by the score – yet on any objective analysis French society is broadly the same as British in terms of public safety and police efficacy.

McLauchlan and Parry are fortunate. Women with more self-respect than they evidently possess would evade the crowds and the cameras and fade as best they can into this country – leaving the rest of us to hope against hope that their protestations of innocence are true.

## Hague's gamble could pay off for the Tories

HE MAY have had a poor reception in some quarters but at least William Hague, in his speech on Europe, has put some clear blue water between his party and the Government. And, although some of his language was incoherent and many of his assumptions wrong-headed, he was right to make his contribution.

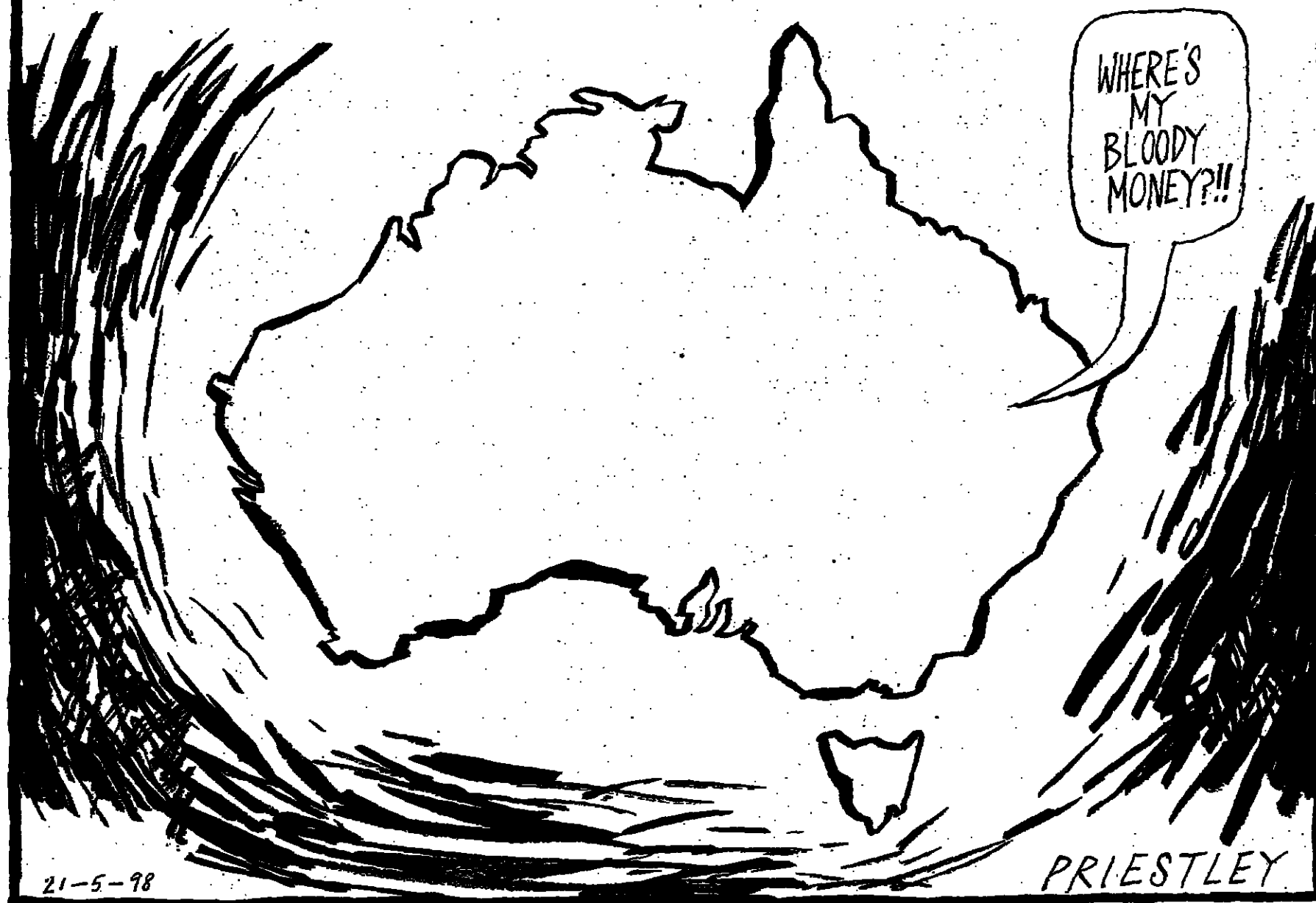
We do not share Mr Hague's Euroscepticism. But Euro-enthusiasts should still welcome discussion about whether the European Union's forty-year-old institutions, technocratic and dirigiste, are now the right ones to command the democratic respect of all the peoples of Europe. True, Mr Hague was very unwise to invoke the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union as examples of the possible fate of the EU if a single currency is introduced and institutions are not reformed. The idea that the EU will trigger civil unrest is absurd, if sincerely put. Mr Hague was also too eager to discount the motivation of those who seek to banish even the remotest prospect of war through an "ever closer union".

Despite these lapses, the arguments that Mr Hague put deserved better than the routine scorn poured on them by Michael Heseltine and other Euro-grandees. They have not tackled the arguments, and have confined themselves to urging Mr Hague to head for the centre ground; but why should this be healthier for the Tories than clarity, a quality in short supply in the last, and for them disastrous, parliament?

Tactically Mr Hague is right to take a gamble on Europe. He has to reject a "me too" approach to the Government's policy. No one could take a Euro-enthusiastic Tory party seriously. Mr Hague was, after all, elected by his party a year ago specifically to deliver a harder line on Europe. He beat Kenneth Clarke, who wanted to keep John Major's "wait and see" approach. To adapt one of Tony Blair's slogans, Mr Hague was elected as a Eurosceptic and he will lead as a Eurosceptic. The Tories will never truly unite on this issue, but at least this way they now have a policy and can perform the useful function of opposing the Government, provoking argument, and speaking out for the section of the electorate who want to keep the pound.

Mr Hague will reap a substantial dividend if economic and monetary union is not successful. He might also entice the Murdoch press back to their old allegiance. The more Eurosceptic of the two main parties managed to win general elections in 1974 and 1992. So scepticism is not always and self-evidently a vote-loser. And what if the Euro is a success? Well, the Conservative Party would get itself a new leader and a new policy. The Tories would find themselves in the same position on Europe as they do now on constitutional reform – learning to live with irreversible changes as a matter of practical politics. Embarrassing but survivable. Mr Hague's policy is, in other words, quite a serviceable one for opposition in the first parliament of the Blair administration. Who knows, he might even start a debate which demonstrates the vibrant British democracy that we are told we are in danger of losing.

## THE NEWS OF THE PARDON FOR THE SAUDI NURSES REACHES OZ.....



### Shambles at private jail

Sir: You report Jack Straw as having told prison officers that he is now a convert to the idea of private prisons (20 May). Last week I had an opportunity of visiting one of the most recent private jails, Parc, outside Bridgend, and my impressions may be of wider interest.

To be blunt, the prison was a shambles. Prisoners were openly contemptuous of the abilities of staff. Perhaps as a consequence, there has been a series of disturbances and the number of disciplinary adjudications is running at more than twice the level of neighbouring state-run prisons. Drug-testing procedures, suicide prevention, race relations and the use of incentives were all in their infancy. And the jail's use of technology – notably the electronic unlocking of gates – was a farce, with the result that movement around the prison took an age.

Since the prison opened six months ago, virtually the entire senior management team has been moved on. Staff turnover has also been at a high level, and the first thing I saw on entering was a notice beseeching the remaining officers to work overtime.

On the plus side, the design of the prison looks promising, the staff who had survived the first six months seemed decent and genuinely committed to their calling, and the new director (governor) was providing a clear sense of leadership. More staff have been recruited and – at the Prison Service's behest – an action plan to rectify weaknesses has been drawn up, including ambitious proposals to enhance the regime.

Every private jail seems to have similar problems in its first year of operation, as inexperienced staff come to terms with all-too-experienced prisoners. After that, performance improves markedly, as I expect it to do at Parc. But it is instructive that, at the beginning of the month, Mr Straw's colleague Joyce Quin, the prisons minister, was so concerned that she called for a full report on the problems at the prison from the director general of the Prison Service.

That report should be made public. So should the review of the pos-

sible use of private finance to build new prisons, whilst retaining the management function in the public sector, to which Mr Straw also referred in his speech.  
STEPHEN SHAW  
Director, Prison Reform Trust  
London EC1

### Third World debts

Sir: As a cheerleader for the G8, Andreas Whitam Smith cuts a rather curious figure ("The campaign for Third World debt relief is counter-productive," 19 May). The man who championed inquisitive journalism now thinks the world's richest countries are best left to consider quietly how much debt relief should be delivered to the world's poorest, without expressions of public concern from the likes of Jubilee 2000.

Debt cancellation is not best left as "the stuff of intricate negotiations". The issue has bounced around the corridors of creditor power for years. But the best current initiative can deliver – in the case of Mozambique – is an extra 27p per person each year.

Mr Whitam Smith says a good campaign needs clear, unambiguous facts. That is why Jubilee 2000 emphasises two key points. The concept of limited liability, which protects creditors, but also debtors and their families, does not apply in international debts. The sons and daughters of the new Zaire are not protected from the sins of their ex-President Mobutu, who was lent \$13.5bn by the West.

Secondly, unlimited liability falls on the ordinary people of debtor countries. If private banks make bad loans to private banks in Thailand, the international financial system protects them. The IMF steps in, forces the Thai government to nationalise the banks and bails out the bankers. The burden falls on the taxpayers of Thailand – and the most likely to get hurt are the children of those taxpayers,

whose health, clean water and sanitation services are cut by governments. This, as Oxfam argues, is most certainly a violation of children's rights.  
ANN PETTIFOR  
Director, Jubilee 2000 coalition  
London SE1

Sir: We keep hearing that the Jubilee 2000 plan for Third World debt forgiveness is fine in theory, but too risky: how can we be sure that all the money released will be used for the benefit of poor people?

When the Lord told Moses that a jubilee year is the time to forgive debts, he didn't add, "so long as the debtor is someone you approve of."  
JANE VAN TASSEL  
ERIC VAN TASSEL  
Fowlsme, Cambridgeshire

Sir: When I borrow money I am expected to pay it back. At the time I take out the agreement there are conditions setting out my obligations and a repayment schedule. If I fail to meet my obligations I leave myself open to all sorts of penalties. Why should Third World countries be any different? If a way is found of wiping out these debts, then you can be assured that someone will pick up the bill. It will be either us as taxpayers or us as bank customers.

Can I turn myself into a Third World country and so get all my debts cancelled and promise to be a good boy in the future?

STEVE LEBB  
Hoddesden, Hertfordshire

Sir: Would it not have been interesting to have held the G8 summit in Mali, Kenya, or Tanzania? Modern tented accommodation and chemical toilets could have been provided in the absence of suitable local facilities. The benefits accruing to the local economies would have been immense.

JAMES MUNRO  
Cleff, Perthshire

### Excuses for Suharto

Sir: I share, with Richard Needham ("These riots show why I wanted to sell tanks to Suharto," 19 May), strong links to Indonesia. I lived there for ten years and married a Javanese woman.

Mr Richard says (as if to excuse the Suharto clan's excesses) that Javanese culture is traditionally "paternal". Quite so – but it is also much richer and more complex than that. Cultures – like children – must eventually grow up, and Indonesians (including most Javanese) had tired of the "father knows best" school of politics espoused by Suharto long before the recent economic crisis.

A central cause of Indonesia's current malaise is that so little cultural development has been allowed to match the economic progress of the last thirty years. Political opposition has been killed or co-opted; progressive artists have been jailed and their work banned; even mildly critical newspapers have been closed down. The regime has retained its grip on power partly by a constant appeal to that ossified paternalistic culture to which Mr Richard refers, and to the superstitions and prejudices that go with it. Any meaningful democracy has been rejected as "culturally inappropriate", and if anything goes wrong it is blamed on the ethnic Chinese.

For free marketeers like Sir Richard, abuse of human rights is only a problem when it starts (as recently in Indonesia) to interfere with business. Was he concerned during the 1980s and early 90s, when poor Indonesians were being thrown out of their homes to make way for Pak Suharto's development projects? Perhaps – but he and the government he served kept very quiet about it.

ROBERT HOLLAND  
University of Birmingham

### Ulster ultimatum

Sir: For too long now, the politicians of the United Kingdom have been distracted by events in Northern Ireland.

It is clear that a number of factors have come together at the moment to make the Irish Republic a "tiger" in European economic terms, which should benefit the whole of Ireland.

Therefore, I wonder whether the time has come for the "mainlanders" to say to those across the Irish Sea: "If you do not seize this chance for gradual change negotiated between the legitimate governments of different parts of the British Isles then we want the right to determine your future." This could be achieved by a referendum in the United Kingdom to determine whether Northern Ireland remained in membership.

Professor RAOUL FRANKLIN  
Vice-Chancellor  
City University  
London EC1

### Hague clings to the past

Sir: Workable government may be based on many impossible philosophies, but it cannot be based on refusal to accept that the world is as it is. William Hague ("Euro could create another Bosnia," 20 May) has now anchored his party in an age of the sovereign nation state which is as dead as the age of the steam engine. His party is therefore no longer able to supply an alternative government.

This means that any Liberal Democrat decision to go into coalition with Labour would be tantamount to the creation of a one-party state.

EARL RUSSELL  
House of Lords

### Albanian wisdom

Sir: To claim Albanian proverbs are meaningless and impractical (Miles Kingston, 19 May) is an insult. I offer a favourite saying of my grandfather, who was Albanian, as proof. "If a snake had wheels, it would not need so many ribs."

MEGES KOEPEK  
Pangbourne, Berkshire

## Here's Dr Wordsmith, ready to be driven to drink by your stupid questions



MILES KINGSTON

IT'S A GREAT pleasure to welcome back Dr Wordsmith, our resident expert on the ever-changing English language. Drunk or sober, Dr Wordsmith is never less than lovable and instructive, so here he is now to answer all your queries on the language we all love and mangle so much. All yours, Doc!

Dear Dr Wordsmith, I've noticed that the habit of putting blackboards outside pubs, food shops, and so on, with the special of the day written on them, has spread a lot recently. I think the idea of chalk writing on a blackboard, all fresh and hand-done, is meant to reinforce the idea that the food itself is fresh and hand-done. However, I have noticed that a lot of these blackboards don't have chalked messages any more – they have messages painted to LOOK as if they are handwritten in chalk, much as the food inside is probably pre-packed and microwaved. Is there any word in English to describe fake painted writing designed to look as if it were a genuine chalked blackboard message?

Dr Wordsmith writes: No, I don't believe there is.

Dear Dr Wordsmith, The commonly accepted word for a philander is a Lothario or a Don Juan or a Casanova or a Romeo...

Dr Wordsmith writes: Hold on, hold on, hold on! That's four words already! Dear Dr Wordsmith, Well, that's the point I was going to make, actually. Why are there so many different names for a philanderer and why are they all Spanish or Italian? Have there not been English philanderers of fame? Did not Lord Byron acquire a reputation as a supreme seducer? Why do we not say of someone that he is a "real Byron"? The nearest we get is to call someone "Byronic", but the ridiculous thing is that we use this to mean "gloomy" or "introspective", and not "philandering"! Why we use the word "Lothario" I do not know: as it is based on a character

in a play that is so completely forgotten I cannot even remember what it is, and I can't be bothered to look it up. Nor do I see why we call a philanderer "a bit of a Romeo", as whatever else Romeo did he remained true and faithful to old Juliet. But of a mish-mash all round. I'd say.

Dr Wordsmith writes: Thank you. I think that covers it very well indeed. And the next question, please? Dear Dr Wordsmith, We use the word "hue" to mean colour, as in "the hues and tints of autumn", but we also use it to mean noise, as in "hue and cry". Which is right? Dr Wordsmith writes: Both. They are two different words. One comes from an Old English word meaning form or shape. The other comes from a French word *huer* meaning to cry out. Oddly enough, it survives in an old Cornish usage. A "huer" was someone who stood on the cliff tops and called out when he saw a shoal of fish in the sea.

Dear Dr Wordsmith, That's very impressive. Where did you get all that stuff from?

Dr Wordsmith writes: From another reader's letter, of course.

Dear Dr Wordsmith, How do you pronounce this Cornish word "huer"?

Dr Wordsmith writes: Well, the other reader doesn't say, but I imagine the same way as the Scots pronounce the word "where". To rhyme with *dour*, or *lure*... Dear Dr Wordsmith, So if a Cornishman whose job was to stand around on cliffs shouting out whenever he saw a shoal of fish were to go to Scotland on holiday, and someone asked him what he did for a living, and he said, "I'm a huer"...

Dr Wordsmith writes: Yes, yes, very funny. I think we get the point. Next, please! Dear Dr Wordsmith, Who was Gary Owen and why is there a long high kick in rugby named after him?

Dr Wordsmith writes: I've no idea.

Dear Dr Wordsmith, In fact, there was no such person as Gary Owen. It is spelt Garryowen, and it is the name of a rugby club in Ireland. Dr Wordsmith writes: You mean, you knew the answer to the question already? Dear Dr Wordsmith, Of course. No point asking a question to which you don't know the answer, or you'll never know if it's the right answer or not. Do people request records on the radio which they've never heard before? Of course not. They request ones they know well. Yet what's the point of requesting to hear something you know off by heart already?

Dr Wordsmith writes: Thank you. Dear Dr Wordsmith, And by the way, the play in which the character *Lothario* appears is "The Fair Penitent", by Nicholas Rowe. Dr Wordsmith writes: Oh God, I can't take any more of this! I'm off down the pub! Anyone coming? Dr Wordsmith will be back soon. Keep those queries rolling!

مكتبة من الأناضول



## A word to the voters of Ulster from the mainland



DAVID  
AARONOVITCH

DEAR undecided voter of Ulster, You are a pretty important person this week not just in deciding how things will be for yourself and your children, but also in determining what they'll be like for me and mine. The big difference is that you've got a vote, and I haven't. I am not complaining about that, just asking you to remember that there are 50 odd million of us over here who don't have a say tomorrow, and that this maybe adds a bit to your responsibility.

We haven't, of course, suffered as much as you have. Most of you know a family that has had a son, a dad, a sister or an uncle killed or terribly wounded in the 30 years of the Troubles. It's different here - though at times many of us have wondered whether we should take our kids to the mall at the weekend, or had partners anxiously telephoning to find out whether we were close to that explosion mentioned in the radio newflash.

And when our relatives have died or been maimed, we haven't comprehended the intricate background in the way you might. What, after all, had an Asian newsgang on the Isle of Dogs to do with the Battle of the Boyne, Bloody Sunday or the beating of the Lambegs on the road to Drumcree? Over here, we cannot tell the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant (though all too often we manage to discriminate between a black person and a white one), and we aren't clear on why we occasionally have our city centres rearranged because someone else can.

If we did have a vote, however, we would probably split about 95 per cent to 5 per cent in favour. Not that this statistic will necessarily impress you. It's probably bad enough to have Bill Clinton attempting to feel your pain: Richard Branson selling you peace; William Hague flopping about your streets (the sun glancing off his baby pate); and Paddy and Tony doing their sensitive action men bit, without people like me telling you what to do. I wouldn't like it.

Perhaps, also, you're wavering precisely because the spooky breadth of the Yes coalition concerns you. There's old Thimble (whose last concert was a Vaughan Williams piece) and Hume, jacketless and paunchy, shaking hands at televised rock concert, both seemingly convinced that the agreement mostly favours their very different visions of Ulster's future. And - worse - over there are Adams and McMichael, blithely assuring their balacaded shadows in the IRA and the UDA that the roadblocks to Irish unity have variously been demolished or fortified.

Maybe this unreliable coalition explains the strange attraction of the Noes, of those unbending men of principle, those stern patriarchy, those tough livers. Their certainty, their constancy is so attractive - a moral pole in a shifting world. There's old Paisley - the last

man in the decadent West actually to use the word "apostasy" - and old Molyneux (old since the age of ten), and old ramrod Bob McCartney reminding you that the worst a No vote could lead to is another 30 years of what you have already (for the most part) managed to survive. So perhaps your kids can survive it too. Perhaps not.

But just look at how they insult you! DUP deputy leader Peter Robinson says, "Only those who side with the terrorists or are intimidated by them will vote yes. Self-respecting democrats and opponents of terror, will emphatically vote No." Well, you are undecided and therefore unemphatic, so clearly you are already a bit soft on the bombers. We can only wonder into which camp he put the doctors from the Royal Victoria Hospital who - sick of patching up bodies - appealed this week for a Yes vote. Are they traitors or just cowards?

Just as big a lie is told about us - the English, Welsh and Scots. It is that we wish to walk away from Ulster, leaving it to its fate - and that this agreement is about washing our hands. We could have done that, of course, many times over, not least after the Ulster Workers' lockout of 1974, and at the height of the IRA bombing campaign on the mainland. But (please reflect on this) there has never been even at the worst and darkest moment - a serious mass movement that mobilised British people around the slogan *Troops Out Of Ireland*. Despite our amazement at the seeming intransigence of the politicians that you Ulster people elected to represent you, we have neither given in, nor wavered in our view that change could only come about with the consent of the majority. Your consent.

And that is exactly what the agreement

Dear undecided, we do not get many opportunities like this

says. Period. So Gerry can argue that he thinks he will one day win that consent, and David can say that he thinks that you will never give it, and meanwhile you can ignore both of them, and can get on with the business of governing yourselves.

As for decommissioning and the question of whether terrorists can reform, well arms can always be replaced, so it is not their existence but the readiness to use them that really matters. As to the latter, the answer appears to be yes, terrorists do repent. Sections of the IRA now recognise that they cannot win an armed struggle, and that's that. It was a terrible waste.

So do we want more of it? Dear undecided, we do not get many opportunities like this. There's sometimes one moment, one magic conjunction, as there was in Israel before the men of certainty murdered Yitzhak Rabin and the men of constancy let off the Tel Aviv bombs. And then, bang, it was gone. And how are they going to get it back now?

At the moment polls show that you represent a quarter of all voters in Northern Ireland - the difference between a tepid and unconvincing Yes, and a firm, historic Yes - which is a very big difference. Even if you vote No, we will not abandon you. But vote Yes anyway.

## Michael Flatley turns pugilist, Allen Ginsberg sings, and plants learn to talk



JOHN  
WALSH

THE news that Michael "Riverdance" Flatley, the twinkie-toed Irish-American hooper and sex god, is "very seriously planning" a new career in boxing, is a worrier. For Mr Flatley is the most popular performer anywhere in the world, rich as Nubar Gulbenkian and at the age when a pugilist might be thinking of swapping his gunshield for an economy tube of Dettol-fix, not starting a career. What mid-life crisis has got Flatley so firmly in its grip that he should risk having his handsome features re-cast like Plasticine by some murderous opponent with only a limited appreciation of Irish dancing?

The answer lies in the Flatley videos. Michael has been role-playing the hard man, the fistic roustabout, the don't-fuck-with-me Leader of the Pack for so long, he now believes in his own creation. Those who've seen Lord of the Dance will recall that he appears in the show as, variously, the saviour of a Celtic sprite, the boss of a bike gang and the dictator figure who commands a platoon of jackbooted myrmidons. Mr Flatley's new ambition is simply to firm up those delusions, to reify these hero dreams on the stage of Real Life.

It's the natural next step for an egomaniacal performer - along the lines of, say, Michael Jackson deciding to become a bishop. I suppose we should be grateful that Mr Flatley stops at boxing, rather than going the whole hog and joining the Hell's Angels or applying to Sandline to be included in their next African sortie.

On the other hand, he can actually box. His father taught him when he was a Chicago schoolboy. He once won a Golden Gloves tournament and, his people tell me, "He's always used boxing as a way of keeping fit." But it's a big step from being a playground scrapper with a prize on the living-room sideboard to being a millionaire thirty-something climbing into the ring with a chap who could maim you for life. And it would give us no pleasure to watch Mr Flatley being brutalised, duffed up, thumped and belaboured for, ooh, several rounds and to see that conceited smirk wiped off his face at last. Or would it?

SPENT Sunday night, somewhat to my surprise, with the voice of Allen Ginsberg running round my head, singing: "Do the meditation/Do the meditation/Do the meditation/ Try a lit-



Michael Flatley may be Lord of the Dance, but can he be King of the Ring?

David Fisher/LFI

tle patience and generosity." Weird but strangely irresistible. I had spent three hours at St James's, Piccadilly, where the ramp of the British poetry Underground (ie Adrian Mitchell and Michael Horowitz) marshalled some friends and fans in celebration of the hairy Beat poet who died a year ago.

At the end, after Lawrence Ferlinghetti (publisher of the Beats' work, including Ginsberg's *Howl*, via his City Lights bookshop in San Francisco) had read three moving elegies to his late friend, the church was filled with the recorded sound of Ginsberg on vocals. It was a revelation.

My colleague Michael Glover, writing yesterday about the Ginsberg tribute, remembered how "tuneless" he had always found the master's attempts at singing. On Sunday, crooning from beyond the grave, he sounded wonderful - cool, amused, sprightly, enjoying himself. He sang a grim little number called "Father Death" in a vibrant baritone like Leonard Cohen on nitrous oxide. He did the "Meditation Rag" as a fast, jolly hoedown, until the congregation joined in the chorus. He sounded like someone who'd been indulged all his life, followed every whim and sexual overture and remained a naughty subversive student for ever.

Tell me, I asked Lawrence Ferlinghetti, did anyone ever try to edit Ginsberg? "Oh sure," said the storm-bearded publisher, "I got him to drop a whole section of *Howl* because it didn't suit. And the title was originally *Howl for Carl Solomon*, but I persuaded him it wouldn't go on the title page. He went through six drafts of *Howl* in the end. He started out saying, 'First thought - best thought', but by the end I believe

he preferred 'First thought - worst thought'." Well, well - so even the wild guru of the counter-culture succumbed to the Eternal Sub-Editor in the end.

I AM indebted to the Institute of Arable Crops Research in Herefordshire for the news that, in future, plants will be genetically encoded with alarm signals. According to the Institute's predictions, when plants feel threatened by ants, or need water or are desperate for some fertiliser, they will emit different colours under an ultraviolet lamp in order to signal that they're in some kind of trouble. "We are tapping into [the plant's] internal mechanisms to allow it to report to us what it needs at least a week before it shows any physical signs of deficiency," says one Dr Brian Forde of the IACR, sounding like a social worker fretting about an underprivileged kid.

The messages that plants will be able to convey strike me as a bit unsophisticated: if they turn blue, it means "I need a drink"; yellow means "I need feeding" and red means "Oh no, here come the ants". We can anticipate more elaborate messages from plants in the future.

The dahlias at Highgrove will be programmed to enquire "Have you come far?" to visiting dignitaries, and signal alarm at the sight of Earl Spencer's limo coming up the drive. The climbing roses in Rosemary Verey's garden will get hysterical about March and give out polychromatic messages which translate as "It's that bloody woman with the rug and the pruning shears again." And down at the Chanel exhibit in the Chelsea Flower Show, a whole line of puzzled camellias will be looking at the retreating figure of Karl Lagerfeld and

asking each other, "What on earth are we doing flowering in May?"

HAPPY birthday to George Best, who is 52 tomorrow. As he was 26 when he retired from football and turned to full-time drinking, this means he has spent half his life as a post-celebrity. He has, in the meantime, become Mr Ubiquitous. No football occasion, from the televised World Cup to a junior five-a-side match in Penge can now take place without his gruff, hirsute and curiously sweet presence.

He's a guest speaker at the National Sporting Club dinner next month, and presiding genius at the United Nations of Football all-day extravaganza in the South Bank Centre. He's become an object of pity to the tabloids since losing his house through non-payment of mortgage, but an object of admiration to Joe Lovejoy, his most recent biographer, whose *Best: A Portrait of a Legend*, out tomorrow, reminds you of the great man's legendary wit.

Lovejoy's book records in odorous detail the famous prison sentence in 1984, when Best was nicked for drunken driving and assaulting a policeman. He got three months and a five-year ban. The defence appealed. Hugh McLivane, the great sports journalist, was a character witness and remembers trying to cheer up the horrified, nick-dreading George, "but such feeble efforts were stifled by the realisation that he was probably going to jail, and before long everyone was staring into the bottom of the coffee cup with nothing to say. Then he glanced across at me with a smile. 'Well I suppose that's the knighthood fucked,' he said." Legends have no need of knighthoods.

## On the road to Ankara with a beleaguered Foreign Secretary



RUPERT  
CORNWELL

IT LOOKED a perfect setting for what is known in the trade as "another Cook debacle". After going to Delhi last year and having Britain described by India as a "third rate power," and then charming the Israelis in March to the point of being

practically thrown out of the country, our peripatetic Foreign Secretary was off on his travels again this week, this time to Turkey.

After the sandstorms, hailstorms and snowstorms which trailed him around the Middle East, the weather too fitted the moment. Shortly after we landed, the skies turned black and a mighty thunderstorm swept Ankara. On past form, he'd be leaving that night, having converted Turkey's discontent with the European Union into a full-scale declaration of war.

But sadly, not so. Mr Cook's misfortunes are well known, and a new opinion poll shows he has the highest negative rating of any member of the Cabinet - such is the price of notoriety when you divorce

your wife and marry your mistress, become entangled in a rumour over illegal arms trading and are generally considered by both friend and foe to be too clever by half. One thing however must be reported: Mr Cook is still alive and in charge as Foreign Secretary.

Does discontent smoulder among his officials? If so, it's not detectable to the naked eye. Is the strain of Sandline getting to Mr Cook? Maybe, but again, you'd be hard-pressed to notice. Perhaps he's become a compartmentalised like Bill Clinton, who keeps Monica Lewinsky and Saddam Hussein in opposite corners of his brain.

Or take Tuesday's excursion to Ankara - eight hours in the air and 3,400 miles in all, for

just five hours on the ground. Now diplomatic gridlocks don't come more gridlocked than the one featuring Turkey, Greece, Cyprus and the EU, sandy disputed rocky islets in the Aegean and much else beside.

Remember, after all, that even Richard Holbrooke - famous banger together of heads over Bosnia and now Mr Clinton's special envoy for Cyprus - has just abandoned in despair his latest attempt to persuade the two communities on the island to talk to one another. Not surprisingly, Mr Cook didn't solve anything, and couldn't even manage to cajole Turkey into attending a fence-mending meeting in Brussels next week.

So was the half-day in Anatolia a useless jaunt by a For-

eign Secretary on the skirts? The fact is that he had little choice but to go. Britain currently holds the EU presidency. Turkey has every reason to still be bitter at the EU's refusal last December in Luxembourg to place it even on the B-list for future membership, while American pressure on Europe to open its doors to Turkey is intense. In political and geo-strategic terms the country is simply too important to be allowed to sulk.

What is more, if his hosts are to be believed, he seems to have said the right things, stroking bruised egos while holding the caustic Cook tongue in check - even as Greece publicly sandbagged an initiative he was putting forward at that very moment to

the Turkish president, Mesut Yilmaz. Finally, just before he left, he signalled the EU's concern over human rights in Turkey by visiting the bedside of Akin Birdal, the leading human rights campaigner almost killed in a shooting attack last week in which the government is widely suspected to have had a hand.

So a waste of time? It depends how you measure the use of diplomatic time. A welcome respite from ordeal by Sandline? Doubtless. But also a reminder that amid all the hyperventilating over the arms-to-Sierra Leone affair - which in America would be treated as a national triumph and in France would hardly raise an eyebrow - we should keep a sense of proportion.

## EYE TEST.

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### Prawn politics

AS PREDICTED in Pandora's Tuesday diary, the Boy Wonder and his speechwriters, after opting for take-away curry rather than pizza, delivered a scorching attack on the EU in Paris, full of flaming metaphors. Warning about the dangers of further European integration, Hague said, "One could find oneself trapped in the economic equivalent of a burning building with no exits." Good grief, what fervour! Pandora could surely use some of that cooking to spice up the diary, so a call was placed yesterday to the Kundan curry house near Smith Square. Yes, confirmed Nayab Abbasi, the Tory leadership are regular customers. What does the Boy Wonder usually order? "Prawn curry, medium, and other standard dishes.

We serve exceptionally A-class dishes from India and Pakistan." Was John Major also a regular. "Oh yes, and he likes our prawn curry as well." Clearly every Eurosceptic in the land will want to keep their fires of indignation stoked with occasional prawn curries from the Kundan. (Pandora didn't have the heart to tell Mr. Abbasi that, while Hague's speech got A-class treatment in British newspapers, the conflagration was totally ignored by the French media.)

### Doff the cap

AT THE Lisson Gallery on Tuesday night, Vogue celebrated its new "Best of British" issue. While it was no surprise to see most of London's fashion world, along with Liam Gallagher and

### PANDORA

Patsy Kensit, Pandora looked in vain for Peter Mandelson, whose ultra-fashionable (one must assume) figure graces one of the mag's pages. However, cover girl Kate Moss made a stunning entrance. Pandora salutes the Venus of Croydon for her stalwart party spirit. After a controversy surrounding her departure from the pretentious Hotel du Cap in Antibes last week, supposedly on account of a wee bit of flamboyance, the supermodel might have been tempted to keep her beautiful head down. Not a bit of it. Tuesday night she was overheard telling a friend, "If it's such a high-class hotel, what is it doing talking to the newspapers?" Pandora

could not agree more. At next year's Cannes Film Festival the Pandora entourage will avoid the "Cap" like the plague.

### Fake nerd

"HELLO EVERYONE. And thank you for signing up for my Beta E-mail Tracking Application or (BETA) for short. My name is Bill Gates." Thus begins an e-mail that has been arriving on thousands of people's computers for months. It offers \$1,000 and a free copy of Windows 98 to "the first thousand people" who receive and forward the message. Readers be warned. "It has nothing to do with Microsoft," a company spokesman told Pandora yesterday. "Some clever hacker launched this forgery."

### G-whizz

MEN AND WOMEN who, like Pandora, are keen to bring part of the "James and Emma experience" into their own homes have been frustrated to learn that "that dress", which readers of the tabloids will know revealed so much of Emma Noble's curvature, is a "countess" number by Julian McDonald and costs £2,500. That's a bit out of reach for most of us, but what about Emma's g-string knickers? Every true "J&E" man and woman would like to know where Emma bought them and what they cost. Presumably it wasn't a four-figure sum. Pandora is offering a bottle of champagne to the first fashion-knowledgeable reader who can supply this information (validated please) for the benefit of all.







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## Bank sees opportunities for financial sector mergers

By Lea Paterson

CONDITIONS are ripe for further consolidation in the UK banking sector, the Bank of England said yesterday.

In its last-ever annual review of market developments in the sector - from 1 June responsibility for banking supervision transfers to the Financial Services Authority - the Bank warned UK banks should lend prudently. Banks have historically taken on significant proportions of bad debt in the late stages of the economic cycle, the Bank of England said.

The Bank also said there were regulatory lessons to be learned from the Asian crisis, although it noted that the UK banks had, to date, managed their exposures to the region well.

In its annual review, the Bank said: "Less consolidation was seen in the banking sector during 1997 than in the previous year, although the conditions remain favourable and there was intense speculation about possible mergers and acquisitions."

Michael Foot, who will become managing director and head of financial supervision at the new FSA, remarked that

if a man from Mars landed in the UK, he would see plenty of opportunity for cost-saving mergers. "One would be surprised if there weren't more of this type of merger," he added.

Mr Foot, who is also an executive director of the Bank of England, said he could envisage a situation where there was greater co-operation between insurance companies and banks. He also pointed to the tough competition in the mortgage market. In its review, the Bank predicted: "The small residential mortgage lenders could be faced with increased competition from

the bancassurance [companies providing both banking and insurance services] who have yet to fully exploit in-roads into the mortgage market."

The Bank said there was little evidence of a repeat of the Eighties-style lending activity which led to significant bad debt losses in the recession of the early 1990s. "Nevertheless, the late stages of the cycle have often proved in the past particularly critical for banks: a significant proportion of what ultimately turn out to be bad debts are put on the books at around that stage," it said.

According to the Bank, the UK economy could now be past its cyclical peak after "a further year of above-trend growth".

The recent upheavals in Asia have led to a renewed focus on worldwide financial stability, the Bank said. Mr Foot said that, in the light of the Asian crisis, the Bank would be asking the international community to revisit the 25 "core principles of banking supervision" issued by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.

Mr Foot noted that the scale of the exposure of UK banks to the troubled Asian region was "relatively modest". He added:

"Many of the banks with the largest exposures tend to be the most professionally involved in the region."

The Bank said it had decided to drop its so-called "provisioning matrix", which was introduced in 1987 to give guidance on provisioning levels for country debt. The Bank said the matrix had "become increasingly incompatible with risk-based supervision".

The Bank repeated its warning that firms which were unprepared for Enron or the year 2000 could face regulatory sanctions.

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## Fund scandal directors to pay huge costs

By Lea Paterson

FOUR senior Morgan Grenfell directors who left the firm in the wake of the Peter Young fund management scandal have been barred from the City for periods of up to three years and ordered to pay costs of up to £200,000 by the regulator, Imro.

Mr Young was fired in September 1996, following the discovery of "serious regularities" in three of his funds.

The four former directors have had their Imro registrations suspended for periods ranging from 16 months to three years and have been ordered to pay Imro's costs.

Elements of the investigation process have caused unease in some areas of the City. In particular, there has been concern that high legal costs could have deterred the four from taking their cases to an independent tribunal.

Graham Kane, formerly managing director of Morgan Grenfell Unit Trust Managers (MGUTM), has had his Imro registration suspended for 16 months, and will pay Imro's investigation costs of £90,740 as well as "a contribution to its disciplinary costs".

Paul Ebling, formerly a compliance officer at Morgan Grenfell, has had his registration suspended for two years and has undertaken not to apply for a senior compliance position for a further 12 months. He will pay Imro's investigation costs of

£69,450 and a contribution towards its disciplinary costs.

Glyn Owen, formerly chief executive of Morgan Grenfell International Fund Management (MGIFM), has had his registration suspended for three years, and will pay Imro investigation costs of £88,770. He too will pay a contribution to Imro's disciplinary costs.

The most severe penalty was reserved for Michael Wheatley, formerly a Morgan Grenfell compliance director. He has had his Imro registration suspended for three years, has been permanently restricted from holding a compliance position, has been ordered to pay Imro's investigation costs of £90,850 and a contribution to its disciplinary costs. Mr Wheatley has left the City to pursue a career in academia.

The suspensions are back-dated to 4 December 1997, when Imro's enforcement committee first met to discuss penalties.

Keith Percy, formerly chief executive of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, is understood to be in settlement negotiations with Imro. Mr Percy, who has substantial personal wealth, is believed to be considering taking his case to an independent tribunal.

Concerns over legal costs are believed to have deterred the four other directors from taking the tribunal route. According to some City estimates, an individual who decides to take their case to

tribunal could incur costs of more than £250,000. And if the individual loses, he or she then becomes liable for Imro's costs, which could exceed £500,000.

While most in the City agree with the principle of the accountability of senior management, concern has been expressed in some quarters over the manner in which Imro conducted its investigations.

Philip Warland, director general of the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds, is just one leading City figure with doubts about the disciplinary process.

Mr Warland, one of the few in the City prepared to air his views publicly, said: "I have no difficulty with the situation that when companies take the public's money, they should be held accountable. Similarly, senior management should be held accountable."

However, Mr Warland said he was concerned about the time and the costs of the process. He was particularly worried that individuals were being "effectively denied access to tribunal". "At the tribunal, the prosecutors' costs are borne by the accused if they lose. That doesn't happen if you're a murderer."

Mr Warland added he would be campaigning to ensure Imro's enforcement procedures would not be adopted when procedures were harmonised across the FSA, the new industry-wide regulator.



Tom Singh yesterday, with Howard Dyer, chairman, and Jim Hodgkinson, chief executive

Photograph: Fergus Wilkie

## Flotation makes £120m for the man who tailored New Look

By Nigel Cope  
Associate City Editor

TOM SINGH, whose stake in the New Look fashion chain will be worth £120m when it comes to the stock market next month, paid himself £10m in salary and bonuses over the past five years, according to the group's pathfinder prospectus published yesterday. This is in addition to the £170m he and his family received from selling a controlling stake in the business to venture capital backers three years ago.

Mr Singh, the son of Asian immigrants who came to Britain in the 1940s, received remuneration of £1.3m in 1994,

then £2.9m, £4.3m, £584,000 and £557,000 in the following years. His average annual salary of almost £2m over that period would have made him one of Britain's best-paid retailers with a salary far higher than his counterparts at larger publicly quoted companies such as Tesco and Kingfisher. "He has made a lot of money out of the company, but then it was a private business and doing very well," a spokesman said.

Mr Singh founded New Look from a single shop in 1969 and has built it to a chain of 444 stores with sales of £323m.

Mr Singh's pay will fall to £235,000 following flotation

where he will take the role of managing director, commercial. Jim Hodgkinson, who joined the business last month from B&Q, will be the highest paid director, on £450,000.

The salary details emerged as New Look reported operating profits of £40m for the year to March, up from £33m the previous year. Sales rose from £242m to £332m. It said like-for-like sales in current trading are 8 per cent on the same period last year.

On flotation New Look is expected to be valued at around £300m-£350m. The float will raise £82m, which will be used to redeem preference shares and repay debt.

Mr Singh will retain his 30 per cent stake and is selling no shares. Thirty per cent of the business is being offered for sale through a placing and intermediaries offer.

Analysts say the valuation will equate to a share price of 150-175p. This will mean a forward rating of 10-12, a substantial discount to the retail sector. "At that sort of price I would think it would very well," said one analyst.

New Look has 409 UK outlets and plans to open a further 140. It abandoned its first attempt at flotation in 1994 due to volatile stock market conditions and concerns about the group's rapid growth.

## Launch of new Rover brings 6,000 jobs

By Michael Harrison

ROVER yesterday unveiled plans to create up to 6,000 jobs through a £400m investment in a new executive car at its Cowley plant near Oxford.

The new model, codenamed the R40, will make its debut at the Birmingham motor show this autumn and will go on sale next spring.

It will be a replacement for the Rover 600 and 800 series and production is expected to be about 100,000 a year - double the current output of the 600/800 series.

The new car takes investment in Rover by its German parent company BMW to £2.5bn since the business was taken over in 1994.

BMW will have spent £4bn on Rover by the turn of the century.

The investment will create 1,000 direct jobs at Cowley - taking the workforce there to 4,000 - and a further 5,000 jobs among suppliers. In total Rover's workforce will rise to 40,000.

The R40 is the fifth model replacement since the BMW takeover. BMW has already brought out new versions of the Rover 200/400 series and the Range Rover as well as a new baby Land Rover, the Freelander, and the MGF sports car.

In addition, a new Mini will go into production at the Longbridge plant in Birmingham in just over two years' time while Rover is also investing £400m in a new engine plant at Hams Hall in Warwickshire.

Despite the enormous investment, BMW is yet to see a return on its acquisition of Rover. The business made a loss of £92m last year, down from £119m in 1996 under German accounting laws. Under UK accounting standards it made a profit of £31m against a loss of £88m.

Dr Walter Hasselkus, the Rover chairman, said the R40 would be the first fully-engineered car to be developed by Rover since BMW took over. The new model will compete against the likes of the BMW 5 series, the Audi A6 and the Jaguar S type.

Rover has yet to decide on a name for it, although the idea of calling it the Rover 700 series has been ruled out because of similarities with the BMW 7 series.

## Super-ombudsman plan will backfire, ministers warned

By Andrew Verity

OMBUDSMEN who deal with complaints against City firms have attacked plans to merge them into one "super-ombudsman", warning it could damage the entire purpose for which they were set up.

All six have told the Government its plans will force them to operate like a court, weakening consumer protection and sharply boosting the cost of dealing with thousands of complaints every year.

The Government wants to create the super-ombudsman under its unified financial regulator, the Financial Services Authority. One body would replace six ombudsmen who deal separately with banking, in-

surance, investment, pensions and building societies.

But the plan will clash with a Bill to bring European human rights into British law, giving everyone the right to a public hearing if a complaint is brought against them.

Peter Dean, investment ombudsman, said: "Because of the Convention we will have to allow for oral and public hearings, cross-examination and so on: in other words the very apparatus of a formal court procedure which the current ombudsman schemes have been set up to avoid."

Mr Dean warned the size of the bureaucracy created by a single ombudsman would put people off complaining. "There's a risk the skills, focus and user-

friendliness of schemes will be dissipated," he said.

Separately, Mr Dean said he was concerned investment firms were hyping their investment products using dazzling figures from the bull-run of the stockmarket over the last year.

As consumers responded to advertisements boasting of the growth, companies were so overwhelmed they failed to even to reply to applications. In some cases, customers had sent cheques and received no reply.

"Firms are making a feature of past performance in their advertising. There's a danger they will say 'roll up, roll up' and people will rush in when they don't understand the product. You only know after the fact if people have been misled."

## Belgo snaps up chic eateries

By Andrew Yates

MOGENS THOLSTRUP, the playboy socialite who has been seen stepping out with a string of glamorous girlfriends on his arm, has made £5.5m from selling three of London's most fashionable restaurants to Belgo, the mauls and fries Belgian restaurant chain.

Belgo, chaired by Luke Johnson - who has bought a large stake in the group out of the fortune he made at the helm of Pizza Express - is pay-

ing a total of £9.3m for the 37-year-old Dane's empire of eateries. The jewel in the crown is Daphne's, the South Kensington restaurant famous for attracting ladies who lunch and "it" girls. Mr Tholstrup has also sold the nearby Pasha restaurant, whose Moroccan food has proved a hit with sophisticated Chelsea diners, and The Collection, where customers parade down a 100ft catwalk to reach their plates of sushi.

A former furniture designer and photographer, Mr Thol-

strup hit London's social scene with a passion in the late 1980s. He set up his first restaurant, Est, in Soho with the help of a loan from his father. In 1991 he saved Daphne's, a former favourite of film legends such as Sir Laurence Olivier and Alec Guinness, from collapse.

After splitting up from wife Paulo Schlanzen, a former model, Mr Tholstrup has dated a succession of beautiful women, including fellow socialite Tara Palmer-Johnson. He is now seeing Lady Victoria Hervey.

Mr Tholstrup has pocketed £3m in cash and £2.5m worth of Belgo shares. He will earn £70,000 a year and be entitled to a bonus as managing director of Signature, a newly created subsidiary of Belgo which will oversee the expansion of the upmarket chain into new areas of London. He has also been granted over a million share options, which would entitle him to large gains if Belgo's share price took off. Belgo is raising £7.1m via a share placing to fund the deal.

### Yesterday in the markets

#### STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5907.40	29.80	0.50	6150.50	4982.80	3.56
FTSE 250	5625.50	30.30	0.53	5803.10	4384.20	2.74
FTSE 350	2671.80	14.50	0.54	2838.70	2141.80	3.40
FTSE All Share	2608.79	14.17	0.54	2861.12	2106.59	3.37
FTSE SmallCap	2774.30	13.80	0.50	2780.50	2182.10	2.89
FTSE MidCap	1498.30	8.90	0.46	1486.80	1225.20	3.02
FTSE AIM	1125.50	8.00	0.72	1117.50	965.90	1.06
FTSE EURO 100	1028.32					
Dow Jones	9071.84	14.20	0.16	9261.91	8971.32	1.57
Nikkei	15852.95	107.30	0.68	20910.79	14488.21	0.97
Hang Seng	9549.18	100.07	1.06	16820.31	7939.13	4.22
Dax	5910.98	122.08	2.07	5442.00	3487.24	1.32

#### INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 month 1 yr 5 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.53 1.03 7.55	5.89 5.89 5.89	5.89 5.89 5.89
US 5.70 5.70 5.70	5.89 5.89 5.89	5.89 5.89 5.89
Japan 0.54 0.54 0.54	5.89 5.89 5.89	5.89 5.89 5.89
Germany 3.63 3.63 3.63	5.89 5.89 5.89	5.89 5.89 5.89

#### CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm
Dollar 1.6329 +7.6c	1.6438	164.38
D-Mark 2.8808 +0.100p	2.7888	2.7888
Yen 222.08 +¥1.00	186.34	186.34
E index 103.00 -0.10	99.00	99.00

#### TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5134	Malta (lira)	0.6171
Austria (schilling)	19.70	Mexican (new peso)	12.58
Belgium (franc)	57.91	Netherlands (guilder)	3.1584
Canada (\$)	2.2944	New Zealand (\$)	2.9422
Cyprus (pound)	0.8228	Norway (krone)	11.87
Denmark (krone)	10.74	Portugal (escudo)	284.38
Finland (markka)	8.5848	Saudi Arabia (riyal)	5.9223
France (franc)	9.4085	Singapore (\$)	2.5387
Germany (mark)	2.9137	Spain (peseta)	237.76
Greece (drachma)	483.42	South Africa (rand)	7.9810
Hong Kong (\$)	12.21	Sweden (krona)	12.29
Ireland (pound)	1.1123	Switzerland (franc)	2.3390
India (rupee)	80.49	Thailand (baht)	57.35
Israel (shekel)	5.5021	Turkey (lira)	398261
Italy (lira)	2777	USA (\$)	1.5876
Japan (yen)	217.06		
Malaysia (ringgit)	5.9070		

Rates for indication purposes only  
Source: Thomas Cook

www.bloomberg.com/uk

source: Bloomberg

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

### Tricky times for Telecom

WHEN it comes to British Telecom, investors have a dilemma. Here is a giant in an industry with almost unlimited potential for making pots of money. The key question, however, is who will be pocketing that cash. Will it be established operators like BT? Or will the spoils go to nimble groups who are able to pick off the most lucrative business at will?

According to Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive, the circle can easily be squared. True, telecoms is a fastest-moving industry. As far as Sir Peter is concerned, however, BT clearly falls into the nimble camp. And when he waxes lyrical about the convergence of fixed and mobile telecom systems, BT's web of operations in continental Europe, not to mention the potential of the internet and other interactive services, even the most hardened sceptic would have to admit to being at least partly won over.

The problem is that the numbers, released yesterday, tell a different story. In the year to March, BT's turnover rose by just 5 per cent, while operating profits came out 4 per cent ahead. Hardly the sign of an exciting growth business.

The problem is competition. In international telephony, BT's charges in the fourth quarter were 15 per cent lower than the previous period, but volumes only grew by 9 per cent, so sales fell. In the UK, BT continues to lose market share in the residential market although it is holding its own in the business segment.

That said, the introduction of interactive services will increase usage of BT's network. And its operations in continental Europe should begin to come good after losses peak at £300m this year. BT will also be debt-free when it receives the £7bn owed to it by WorldCom later this year, giving it plenty of firepower to pursue other deals. The question is whether BT, which watched its attempted merger with MCI collapse last year, is able to grasp the opportunities Sir Peter sees. At 638p, down 2.5p yesterday, the shares are no more than a firm hold.

### Blacks in the top league

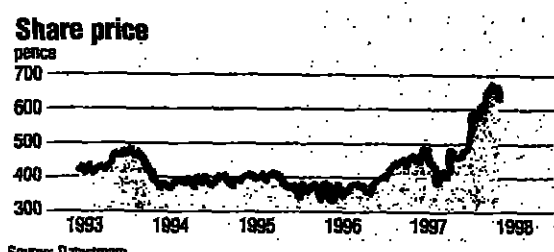
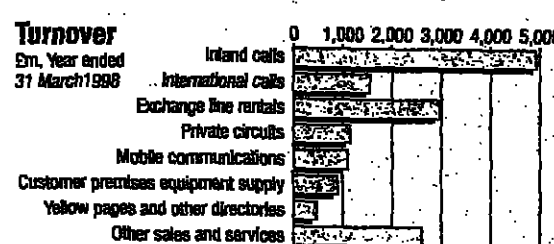
LIKE all sports retailers Blacks Leisure has been affected by the shift in sentiment as fears have grown about over-supply and weakening demand. Blacks shares, which enjoyed meteoric growth in 1996 and early 1997, fell sharply in March as investors took fright. Yet demand is still

#### BT: At a glance

Market value: £40.97bn, share price 638p (-2.5p)

Trading record 94 95 96 97 98

	94	95	96	97	98
Turnover (£bn)	13.7	13.9	14.4	14.9	15.6
Pre-tax profits (£bn)	2.8	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.2
Earnings per share (p)	28.5	27.8	31.6	32.8	26.7
Dividends per share (p)	16.7	17.7	18.7	19.9	19.0



predicted to grow albeit at a slower rate. The concerns relate more to the amount of new space being added by the major chains, particularly JJB Sports and Sports Division.

Blacks offered some reassurance yesterday with a 35 per cent increase in full-year profits to £13.6m and a five per cent rise in like for like sales in current trading. That is a decent performance in a tough market. Blacks admits new space could be a problem but says it will be able to maintain growth as the market polarises among the larger players. It predicts the top five sports retailers' share of the market will increase from 30-50 per cent over the next few years.

Blacks' strength is that it is more broadly based than its main rivals. As well as First Sports, whose like for like sales are flat in current trading, it has Blacks Outdoor (up 21 per cent) and Active Venture (up 8 per cent). Even at First Sports, replica shirts account for just 5 per cent of sales (down from 7 per cent the previous year) compared to around 15 per cent at JJB. This is a benefit as demand for replica is flattening as more consumers buy them direct from club shops.

Blacks itself is cautious on store opening with 35 this year, 30 First Sport and the rest Blacks Leisure.

The World Cup should provide a boost and chief executive Simon Bentley is confident the sales will be incremental rather than simply dragging sales forward from the autumn.

On current forecasts of £15.5m this year the shares, down 12.5p to 388.5p yesterday, trade on a meagre forward rating of 12. Beyond the World Cup the market will be tougher this year but Blacks is a well-managed company with a safer spread of interests. Hold.

### Maturing nicely

LIKE a good Scotch, Glenmorangie's plans take a long time to mature.

Four years ago the whisky group embarked on a strategy to promote its premium malt brands. To that end it has cut back on its bulk sales to Europe and the US, choosing instead to accelerate the production of its pricier and higher margin bottles such as 18-year-old Glenmorangie.

That policy is beginning to look a canny one. Malt whisky sales are still growing rapidly while the cheaper end of market, which has been hit by supermarkets slashing prices, continues to be difficult.

Against that backdrop Glenmorangie's profits for the year to March rose 8 per cent to £8.4m. Ignoring the impact of the strong pound, profits would have shown a healthy 12.4 per cent rise.

Similarly Glenmorangie's expansion into China is likely to take years to come to fruition. But if it can exploit the fact that it has the only official licence to sell spirits in the Chinese market before competitors catch on, then it could make serious money.

Of course Glenmorangie is a small fish in a big pond dominated by sharks such as Diageo. But its strength is still its brand and by teaming up with big players such as Jack Daniels manufacturer Brown & Forman to distribute its whiskies then it should be able to hold its own in vital markets like the US. And prices are holding up well.

Analysts forecast profits of around £9.5m, putting the shares, which remained unchanged at 780p yesterday, on a prospective PE ratio of 16. Good value.

# National Power goes into China

By Michael Harrison

NATIONAL Power yesterday unveiled plans to move into the Chinese electricity market as part of an overseas expansion strategy that will see half its generating interests located outside Britain within the next three years.

The move is designed to compensate for the impact of increasing competition at home and declining profits caused by tougher price controls and the end of guaranteed contracts with the supply companies.

National Power is investing £250m in two coal-fired stations in China, increasing its overseas investment to almost £1.5bn. The company also said that it planned to double the rate of overseas investment to £600m a year over the next two years.

Keith Henry, chief executive, said that by 2001-2002, its power station interests would

be split 50:50 between the UK and overseas. At present it has 16,000 megawatts of plant in the UK and interests in 10,000 megawatts of overseas generating capacity.

The company already has significant interests in Australia, Pakistan and the Czech Republic and has plans to expand further into areas such as central Europe, Turkey, Zimbabwe and the US.

However, Mr Henry said National Power was not interested in following its rivals PowerGen and Scottish Power in seeking to buy a US electric utility. "We struggle to make the numbers add up," he said.

Profits last year from overseas operations were £130m and National Power expects that to grow to as much as £190m over the next two years.

The overseas contribution helped offset the squeeze on its UK earnings last year which

saw pre-tax profits fall from £740m to £720m in the year ended 31 March.

This year National Power expects its UK profits to be lower by £130m because of the end of the sales contracts linked to long-term deals to buy coal.

The company, which will buy about 10 million tonnes of coal from UK pits this year, is in talks with ministers over a deal to protect the coal industry from disappearing altogether. This is likely to involve a moratorium of up to five years on consents for further gas-fired power stations and supply arrangements which will guarantee demand for 20m to 25m tonnes of British coal.

Mr Henry said, however, that there had been no discussions about the generators being broken up to create more competition or forced to dispose of mothballed coal-fired stations to other operators.

### Courtaulds confirms a second bid approach

COURTAULDS' chief executive, Gordon Campbell, yesterday confirmed that the board had been approached by PPG Industries, but added that as yet no offer had been received and it was not possible to determine whether this approach would lead to a firm offer. The chemical company, which has accepted a £2.26bn takeover bid from Akzo Nobel NV, said that it was not planning a final dividend in light of the situation, but it said it would pay an unchanged 11.95p if the Akzo offer lapsed.

Courtaulds shares traded unchanged at 470.5p, higher than the 450p-a-share offer pitched by Akzo, the Netherlands' biggest chemical company, indicating that investors feel a higher offer will be made. Analysts said they expected a bidding war to develop. Courtaulds yesterday said pre-tax profits for the year had fallen to £105m from £134m.

### Trafford Park rejects offer

THE BOARD of Trafford Park Estates unanimously rejected a £146m offer from Green Property yesterday, saying the bid undervalues the British property company. The offer "fails to reflect the prospects for this portfolio," Trafford said in a statement. The board of Trafford also said that in view of the change in circumstances it would allow its own agreed £26.7m share offer for Barlows to lapse. Trafford had offered to pay one of its shares for every 2.61971 Barlows shares held and had received acceptances for 78.9 per cent of the issued share capital. Green's bid is conditional on the Barlows offer not going ahead.

### Mellon offer is withdrawn

BANK of New York yesterday withdrew its hostile \$22.3bn takeover offer for Mellon Bank, as expected, ending a month-long public battle in which each side claimed to have the support of Mellon shareholders. "I am particularly dismayed at Mellon's dismissive and superficial treatment of this transaction," Thomas Remy, chairman and chief executive of Bank of New York, said in a statement. "It is Mellon's own shareholders who have been hurt by the intransigence of their company's management." Bank of New York had offered Mellon 1.4 Bank of New York shares for each Mellon share on April 22.

### M&S plays down talk of split

MARKS & SPENCER yesterday played down reports of a board split and confirmed that its executive chairman, Sir Richard Greenbury, would stay on until he reaches 65 in four years' time. The retailer said it was the board's unanimous wish that Sir Richard stay until he is 65. M&S said it had made the statement as a result of recent press comment on the question of the chairman's retirement and succession. "The board discusses the issues relating to organisation and succession on an ongoing basis including the roles of chairman and chief executive," the statement said.

Press speculation about the succession intensified recently following a reshuffle of the four top managing directors. It has included suggestions that M&S might consider splitting the role of chairman and chief executive. But on Tuesday, Sir Richard said there was no deep meaning behind the management changes and they were simply designed to give managers experience of different areas of the business.

### US trade deficit soars

THE US trade deficit hit a record \$13bn in March, up 7 per cent from February, reflecting the continuing strength of the economy and the dramatic turn for the worse in Asia. It was the fourth increase in a row. The deficit for the year as a whole is expected to be nearly \$150bn, compared with \$113bn last year. The merchandise trade deficit was a record \$20.2bn, offset by a services surplus of \$7.2bn. Exports were up \$3.3bn but failed to keep pace with imports, which increased by 3.8 per cent.

### Illegal deposits man fined

VICENZO ABELLO, 49, has been fined £5,000 after his firm illegally took deposits totalling £10.8m from several hundreds of depositors. Mr Abello was the principal partner in A&G Facilities, which was not authorised, licensed or supervised under the Banking Acts. The Bank of England said that unauthorised deposit-taking did not necessarily involve dishonest intent, and none was alleged in this case.

Glenmorangie celebrates record sales of more than 1m cases

GEOFFREY MADDRELL, the chairman of Glenmorangie, right, celebrates the achievement of sales of more than one million cases of whisky in a year, the first time it has reached this level in its history, writes Andrew Yates. Glenmorangie yesterday announced an 8 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £8.4m for the year to March. It also unveiled plans to push ahead with expansion in China, where the group holds the only official licence to sell spirits, and to continue its strategy of investing heavily in its premium malt brands.

Investment Column, this page



# Land Securities on £650m buying spree

By Andrew Yates

LAND SECURITIES, the United Kingdom's largest property company, yesterday announced plans for a £650m development programme to take advantage of the buoyant market.

The scheme, the largest it has undertaken since the property market was booming a decade ago, comes hot on the heels of a £420m development programme the group has just completed.

The news came as Land Securities unveiled a strong set of results for the year to March.

The sharp growth in the property market helped net assets per share rise 18 per cent to 924p. Pre-tax profits increased 9 per cent, to £266m. Ian Henderson, Land

Securities' managing director, ruled out any corporate activity, saying that the group was not considering any mergers or acquisitions.

"We see a lot of speculation about mergers. But it is very difficult when assets are standing at a premium to make any sense of those transactions," he said.

Land Securities said that demand for property was strong across the board. The group plans to continue to concentrate on the central London office market, the out-of-town retail market, some industrial developments and "one or two leisure opportunities".

Mr Henderson said the company's policy of selling properties which no longer provided future growth and replacing them with buildings

giving increasing income in the future, might mean that short-term profits could be hit. The group disposed of £247m of property during the year as part of its effort to churn its estate.

However, he said that the property market was unlikely to return to the boom times of the 1980s. "I think it's steady as we go," he said.

Mr Henderson pointed out that the market had so far ridden the strength of sterling, higher interest rates and the economic turmoil in Asia well, but he remained cautious about the future.

Peter Birch, the former chief executive of Abbey National, is to become chairman of the group this July, replacing Sir Peter Hunt, who died in December last year. Land Securities shares closed down 6p at 1,016p.

### ABN Amro denies interest in Bear Stearns

By Andrew Verity

ABN Amro, the Dutch banking giant, has flatly denied reports it is in advanced talks to buy Bear Stearns, the \$3.8bn US investment bank.

"It's nonsense," said Jules Prast, ABN Amro's chief spokesman. "We are not in for US investment banks of this size. Big US investment banks wouldn't fit because, as we have always said, that is not the path we will take."

A newspaper report yesterday insisted a deal with Bear Stearns was expected "imminently" but Mr Prast said no talks had taken place.

While ABN Amro has made 20 acquisitions since its formation in 1990, its growth strategy in the US is to buy smaller, regional operations which can be integrated slowly. In the US, it has bought LaSalle, a branch network based in big US cities. Last year, it bought Chicago Corporation and Stan-

dard Federal Bancorporation, both medium-sized businesses. Bear Stearns is known to be worried that it may lack the size to compete with rival US operations, many of whom are expanding rapidly to become global players.

City analysts believe a more likely candidate to buy Bear Stearns would be UBS, the Swiss bank formed from the merger of UBS and SBC. Another possibility is Deutsche Bank, the German private bank.

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# Bus and train companies motor ahead

## MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

BUS AND TRAIN shares got up speed as the stock market pondered the possible benefits that could emerge from the Government's transport policy.

A White Paper is due in the next few weeks. It will point to greater promotion of public transport at the expense of the motor car.

In anticipation of Government moves, transport shares have already enjoyed exuberant runs in the past year, outperforming the rest of the market.

FirstGroup led the latest march with an 18.5p gain to 427p. Not far behind was Stagecoach, up 31p to 1,266p. National Express put on 22.5p to 1,079.5p and Railtrack 18.5p to 1,182p. Stagecoach is one of the best performing transport shares; it arrived at 112p five years ago.

IT shares, ahead of ComputaCentre's arrival, again put on a power display with FT 145p to 1,500p and Misp strengthening its Footsie

claims with a 220p gain to 3,570p.

The three leading indices made headway. Footsie ended 29.6 points higher at 5,907.4.

At one time was up 63.4. The mid and small cap indices moved confidently to new peaks.

Nycomed Amersham, the medical group, had the unusual distinction of topping both the blue chip winners and losers boards.

The non-voters jumped 109p to 2,100p while the voting shares fell 87p to 2,007p. For once it was not a distortion created by order-driven trading. As part of a capital reconstruction the two-tier system is being abolished with all shares given equal votes. The disparity between the two prices merely acknowledged the changes.

Figures lifted Carlton Communications 23p to 517p and Compass, the caterer, continued to digest its results as well as takeover possibilities

with a 46p rise to 1,186p.

For the second day running financials clawed their way back as investors took the view they had been over-sold.

Norwich Union, Schroders and Woolwich were among those in form although National Westminster Bank missed out, falling 19p to 112p.

Mirror, the newspaper group, was the day's hot takeover tip. The shares jumped 6.5p to 207p on suggestions of a German offer at around 260p. The group is also talking to analysts this week.

Shell was soft, off 3.25p to 448.25p. An uninspiring investment presentation in Holland was blamed.

IT's take over strike at EIS prompted a revaluation of other engineering groups.

Weir, 19p to 278.5p, and IMI, 15p to 524p, were among those to benefit. Engineer UPF jumped 26p to 105p as a possible bidder appeared.

Babcock International, firm

this month, put on another 1p to 92p.

The VideoLogic Sega saga continued as shares of the 3D graphics company moved ahead 5p to 85p on renewed talk that the Japanese Sega giant will confirm its use of VideoLogic's second-generation PowerVR 3D technology today.

Millennium & Copthorne,

the hotel chain, fell 22.5p to 594.5p. Hong Leong Investments, the Far Eastern group, duly confirmed it had trimmed its stake, selling 3.75 million shares. It now has 52.54 per cent and says it intends to remain the controlling shareholder.

Toktel Cliveden, where bid talks are under way, firmed 2p to 92p in brisk trading.

House of Fraser, the department store chain, added 9p to 192.5p on US investment presentations.

The Falkland Islands produced its own market explosion. Desire Petroleum's cautious statement about oil and gas shows in drillings off the islands provoked a stampede of interest with the shares gushing 96.5p to 305.5p. They arrived at 125p last month.

Greenwich Resources and Westmount, with stakes in Desire were buoyant; Greenwich gained 5.25p to 28.75p and Westmount 33p to 190p. The excitement rubbed off on to the

Falkland Islands company, up 28p to 176.5p. Its supply operations could benefit from any big South Atlantic strike.

Cambridge Mineral Resources, with onshore exploration projects on the islands, firmed 0.25p to 12.25p.

Bid target Jeyes, the disinfectant group, hardened 8.5p to 265p as the Framlington investment group, clearly expecting an offer higher than the market price, picked up a 1.46 per cent stake.

Ambient Media and Eskmuir Properties made quiet debuts. Ambient, placed at 90p, closed at 92.5p and Eskmuir ended at 225p from a 220p placing.

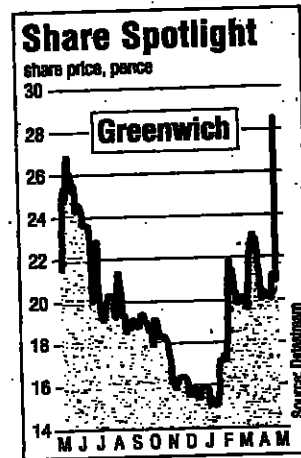
On Ofex, Courvois Diamonds and Gold, run by Professor Richard Courvoisier, found Ireland's Galmoy zinc mine, fell 2p to 67.5p. It raised £510,000 through a private placing at 60p a share. The company believes it has discovered Ireland's first major gold mine in County Monaghan.

## TAKING STOCK

HEREWARD Ventures, being developed as an exploration and investment company by David Bramhill, is planning a dual autumn share listing - in Vancouver and on Dublin's developing companies market. Campbell O'Connor, the company's stockbroker, currently makes a market in the shares; price is about 4p. Hanover Continental, a venture capital group, is taking a 10 per cent stake, buying new shares at 3p.

SIRA Business Services, a cleaning group, has picked up a pack of new contracts, including Stringfellow's night club in London, health clubs in 50 Post House Hotels and Northampton's police stations. The deals are worth around £2m. Sira's shares held at 3.25p.

SKETCHLEY firmed to 49.5p. The cleaning and film processing group may be near to clinching a deal over its retail operations. A management buyout is thought to be likely.



52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	PER	Div
<b>Alcoholic Beverages</b>								
49	49	49	Adnoca	49.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
50	50	50	Adnoca	50.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
51	51	51	Adnoca	51.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
52	52	52	Adnoca	52.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
53	53	53	Adnoca	53.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
54	54	54	Adnoca	54.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
55	55	55	Adnoca	55.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
56	56	56	Adnoca	56.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
57	57	57	Adnoca	57.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
58	58	58	Adnoca	58.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
59	59	59	Adnoca	59.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
60	60	60	Adnoca	60.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
61	61	61	Adnoca	61.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
62	62	62	Adnoca	62.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
63	63	63	Adnoca	63.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
64	64	64	Adnoca	64.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
65	65	65	Adnoca	65.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
66	66	66	Adnoca	66.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
67	67	67	Adnoca	67.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
68	68	68	Adnoca	68.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
69	69	69	Adnoca	69.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
70	70	70	Adnoca	70.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
71	71	71	Adnoca	71.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
72	72	72	Adnoca	72.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
73	73	73	Adnoca	73.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
74	74	74	Adnoca	74.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
75	75	75	Adnoca	75.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
76	76	76	Adnoca	76.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
77	77	77	Adnoca	77.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
78	78	78	Adnoca	78.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
79	79	79	Adnoca	79.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
80	80	80	Adnoca	80.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
81	81	81	Adnoca	81.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
82	82	82	Adnoca	82.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
83	83	83	Adnoca	83.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
84	84	84	Adnoca	84.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
85	85	85	Adnoca	85.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
86	86	86	Adnoca	86.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
87	87	87	Adnoca	87.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
88	88	88	Adnoca	88.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
89	89	89	Adnoca	89.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
90	90	90	Adnoca	90.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
91	91	91	Adnoca	91.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
92	92	92	Adnoca	92.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
93	93	93	Adnoca	93.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
94	94	94	Adnoca	94.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
95	95	95	Adnoca	95.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
96	96	96	Adnoca	96.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
97	97	97	Adnoca	97.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
98	98	98	Adnoca	98.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
99	99	99	Adnoca	99.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
100	100	100	Adnoca	100.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	PER	Div
<b>Banking</b>								
101	101	101	Bank of Ireland	101.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
102	102	102	Bank of Ireland	102.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
103	103	103	Bank of Ireland	103.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
104	104	104	Bank of Ireland	104.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
105	105	105	Bank of Ireland	105.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
106	106	106	Bank of Ireland	106.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
107	107	107	Bank of Ireland	107.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
108	108	108	Bank of Ireland	108.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
109	109	109	Bank of Ireland	109.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
110	110	110	Bank of Ireland	110.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
111	111	111	Bank of Ireland	111.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
112	112	112	Bank of Ireland	112.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
113	113	113	Bank of Ireland	113.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
114	114	114	Bank of Ireland	114.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
115	115	115	Bank of Ireland	115.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
116	116	116	Bank of Ireland	116.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
117	117	117	Bank of Ireland	117.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
118	118	118	Bank of Ireland	118.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
119	119	119	Bank of Ireland	119.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
120	120	120	Bank of Ireland	120.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
121	121	121	Bank of Ireland	121.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
122	122	122	Bank of Ireland	122.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
123	123	123	Bank of Ireland	123.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
124	124	124	Bank of Ireland	124.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
125	125	125	Bank of Ireland	125.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
126	126	126	Bank of Ireland	126.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
127	127	127	Bank of Ireland	127.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
128	128	128	Bank of Ireland	128.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
129	129	129	Bank of Ireland	129.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
130	130	130	Bank of Ireland	130.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
131	131	131	Bank of Ireland	131.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
132	132	132	Bank of Ireland	132.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
133	133	133	Bank of Ireland	133.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
134	134	134	Bank of Ireland	134.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
135	135	135	Bank of Ireland	135.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
136	136	136	Bank of Ireland	136.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
137	137	137	Bank of Ireland	137.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
138	138	138	Bank of Ireland	138.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
139	139	139	Bank of Ireland	139.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
140	140	140	Bank of Ireland	140.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
141	141	141	Bank of Ireland	141.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
142	142	142	Bank of Ireland	142.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
143	143	143	Bank of Ireland	143.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
144	144	144	Bank of Ireland	144.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
145	145	145	Bank of Ireland	145.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
146	146	146	Bank of Ireland	146.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
147	147	147	Bank of Ireland	147.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
148	148	148	Bank of Ireland	148.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
149	149	149	Bank of Ireland	149.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
150	150	150	Bank of Ireland	150.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	PER	Div
<b>Share Price Data</b>								
151	151	151	Bank of Ireland	151.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
152	152	152	Bank of Ireland	152.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
153	153	153	Bank of Ireland	153.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
154	154	154	Bank of Ireland	154.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
155	155	155	Bank of Ireland	155.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
156	156	156	Bank of Ireland	156.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
157	157	157	Bank of Ireland	157.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
158	158	158	Bank of Ireland	158.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
159	159	159	Bank of Ireland	159.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00
160	160	160	Bank of Ireland	160.00	+0.00	13.8	8.3	0.00



# These superstars get everywhere, and there is nothing to stop them



**DIANE COYLE**  
ON THE FORCE  
BEHIND RISING  
INEQUALITY

AFTER the space shuttle Challenger exploded soon after take-off in January 1986, the cause of the tragedy turned out to be a fault in a simple doughnut-shaped rubber seal, known as an O-ring, linking two connecting pipes. One of the simplest components in the multi-billion-dollar shuttle lay behind the loss of life and the destruction of the work of thousands of people.

The report the following June of the presidential commission appointed to investigate the accident concluded: "The failure was due to a faulty design." More broadly, it said, the number of shuttle flights scheduled had put too much strain on the capacity of the workforce.

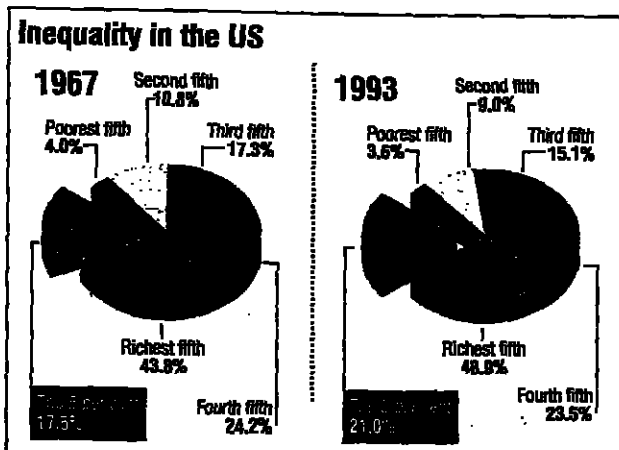
The lesson is not just the obvious one that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. For economists there is an additional moral: the smallest error in one component or by one team member can put at risk the quality of an entire finished product or project. The higher the quality required, the more serious an issue this becomes - and in the advanced economies, quality is rising all the time as manufacturing and services progress steadily towards higher and higher value added activities.

This observation forms the basis of one explanation for otherwise inexplicable patterns of change in earnings, namely the

fact that increasing income inequality is to be observed not just between high-skill and low-skill employees, but also within different professions where skill levels must be similar. The rise in inequality has what has been described as a "fractal" nature, to be found at any level you look in the figures. It is not just that top lawyers earn more than their secretaries, but that earnings among lawyers and amongst secretaries are also more unequal.

One widely accepted explanation for this is based on the "superstar" hypothesis. This says that, just as the existence of a mass market for films allows some individuals, perhaps only slightly more talented than others, to capture a huge market share because cinema-goers would rather see a known quantity like John Travolta or Gwyneth Paltrow than an unknown. It is virtually costless for the stars to reach a bigger audience - they only act the once during filming - and the audience overwhelmingly demands the market leader. The superstar phenomenon is being extended by new technologies through ever wider swaths of the economy because these supply and demand conditions are replicated in all sorts of weightless industries. Now we have superstar lawyers, designers, doctors and even intellectuals.

What, then, does the O-ring example add as an explanation for increasing income inequality? The answer, set out in a new book by Daniel Cohen, a French economist, is that, as NASA discovered, all the workers in a team need to have a similar level of competence. No matter how much it would cost the wage bill, it is not worth hiring less than the very best lab technicians you can find. Similarly, the top law firms need the top secretaries, whose pay will reflect their value to the company, whereas secretaries working for neighbourhood solicitors will earn considerably less. It means that very slight differences in skill and performance are magnified into big disparities in income. There is no



longer a single market for any individual's prospects depend on which company they are employed by, and career paths are much more volatile.

This phenomenon is technology-fuelled in two ways. One is that advances in technology are driving the advanced economies down the path of adding more and more value as low-value added production can so easily be carried out in emerging economies. The other is that it is increasingly easy for goods and services to be produced more flexibly with various components sub-contracted out. Less mass production means smaller units of production which can more easily become homogeneous in terms of the skill levels of the individuals within them. An outfit which is very high skill across the board can buy in any low-skill goods or services it needs. Thus the City law firm will subcontract its cleaning as cheaply as possible while paying its secretaries a relatively high wage.

The really bad news about this process, which Professor Cohen calls "assortative matching", is that it is disastrous for the low-skill minority. It makes their exclusion from higher incomes look pretty much insuperable. Indeed, the usual prescription of improving the education and skill level of the workforce might help in the long run but in the short run can end up excluding the people at the bottom of the skills heap

even more thoroughly. It all looks rather gloomy for politicians - or unions - who want to halt the trend towards obscene inequality observed in the US and UK.

The New Labour Government's "Fairness at Work" White Paper this week is unlikely to offer any correctives to the fundamental economics driving the trend. Nor are issues like the minimum wage needed for union recognition, the TUC's chosen terrain for battle, anything more than a sideshow compared to addressing the huge underlying shifts in the situation of the un-

Once an economy starts going down this path, it is impossible to turn back

derdogs and the top dogs in our society.

One possibility for shaping future policies, however, lies in recognising that the O-ring theory implies that the productivity level of individual workers does not depend on their own efforts alone. It also depends on the productivity of their colleagues at all levels. It is not brute strength in numbers that might form a basis for collective

organisation in the workplace, as in old-style unionism, but rather genuine economic interdependence. For all that management gurus spout about the importance of teamwork, few managers seem to take it seriously, or at least see it as applying only to select categories of employees. That will change.

Another question is the openness of high-value, high-income jobs to all comers. It will be essential, for reasons of fairness and social peace, to make sure that the jobs market is as mobile as possible, with no closed shops. This is less of a worry in an entrepreneurial economy like the US where anyone can start up their own business. Even so - as with so many other aspects of economic policy - regulation rather than intervention could turn out to be the key issue.

However, once an economy has started down the path of inequality, when the organisational, legal and cultural barriers to some categories of people receiving higher and higher incomes have vanished, it is impossible to turn back. Tax away high salaries? Many of us might cheerfully see the top income tax rate go up to 50 per cent, say, but there is no appetite among voters and politicians anywhere for a return to punitive taxation. Introduce a pay policy that sets upper earnings limits? It would be unpopular and unenforceable.

In the very long run increasing the productivity of the entire population through education and training is probably the only answer, as it was after the Industrial Revolution. Meanwhile, fairness will be best served by making sure the opportunities for superstardom and access to high-value jobs are as widely available as possible. Where there is no possibility of more equality of outcome, equality of opportunity is the only alternative.

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\*The Wealth of the World and the Poverty of Nations, Daniel Cohen, MIT Press £19.95.

## PEOPLE & BUSINESS



TOP American economists have filed evidence with the court that will be considered by the Justice Department's case against Microsoft, claiming that the company is harming computer users by its anti-competitive behaviour. No surprise there - one of the best sources of income for academic economists in the US is giving expert evidence in court, with both defence and prosecution hiring their own eggheads.

What is odd is that one of the Justice Department's anti-Microsoft experts is Professor Franklin Fisher of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "Microsoft will impede any innovation that threatens the dominance of Windows," according to his testimony. He was famed among a generation of Harvard and MIT students in the early 1980s for his role as an expert - defending IBM against the competition authorities' onslaught on its monopoly.

The prof's book about the case, *Folded, Spindled and Mutilated*, made it on to his class reading lists. It must mean he knows a lot about monopolies in the computer industry - and has, bravely, changed his mind in the past decade.

SIMON Bentley, who runs the Blacks Leisure sports group, has a keen sense of humour if his advertising campaigns are anything to go by. The last one for the group's First Sports chain, featured sperm racing towards an egg alongside the slogan "First is everything, second is nowhere". This ran only on Sky TV and, as you might expect, only after the evening watershed.

This time he has teamed up with one of football's best known hardmen. The new ad, which starts in a couple of weeks time to celebrate the World Cup, shows a bunch of football supporters legging down the street towards a pub bearing the legend "World Cup TV shown here".

The replica be-shirted boys surge in only to find a muscular skinhead in a red Wales shirt sitting in the front row and monopolising the best seats. The leader of the gang marches forward and taps the gent on the shoulder to suggest he hops it. But when the character turns round it is Vinnie Jones, QPR's tough tackling midfielder once pho-

tographed grabbing Gaza's privates. Queue, docile retreat.

FINANCE directors of FTSE 100 companies come in all shapes and sizes, but they do seem to be getting younger all the time.

The latest to take charge of the books at one of the country's 100 largest companies is Martin Stewart, who was yesterday appointed finance director at British Sky Broadcasting, the satellite television group, at the tender age of 34.

Not that Mr Stewart would necessarily have wanted to come into the job in the way he did. The vacancy was only created by when the previous incumbent, Nicky Carrington, suddenly died after a short illness in March.

After a thorough search, Sky decided Mr Stewart, who most recently was working as Mr Carrington's deputy and subsequently took over a large part of his role, was the man to take over. "He was by far the best candidate for the job," my mole over at Sky's Isleworth headquarters whispers admiringly.

AFTER losing out on the chance to become chairman of Argos, the catalogue retailer, Peter Birch, the former chief executive of Abbey National, did not have to wait long for another lucrative directorship to come his way. Land Securities, the UK's largest property company, appointed Mr Birch as its new chairman yesterday. He will provide a long term replacement for Sir Peter Hunt, the highly respected elder statesman of the property sector who sadly passed away suddenly last December.

Mr Birch was all lined up to become the new chairman of Argos if only the group had been able to maintain its independence. But he has Jim Cox at Schroders Asset Management to blame for losing the chance to take up his new employment.

Mr Cox sided with Lord Wolfson's Great Universal Stores in a bitter takeover battle. Mr Birch will take up his duties on 1 July to join Ian Henderson, the recently appointed managing director of the property group.

CHRISTIE'S may have been snapped up by a Frenchman and Rolls-Royce may be heading for German ownership, but at least one key British asset has been saved for domestic ownership. Step forward then, Jan Reynolds, a Bristol Businesswoman who has bought Octavian Hunt, the country's last remaining match manufacturer for an undisclosed sum.

Octavian Hunt has been making matches in Redfield, Bristol since the 1870s and they are still hand-dipped and packed. The business was deemed surplus to requirements by Chemring Group and so Ms Reynolds, the managing director, organised a management buyout.

"Having worked in the company from a secretarial role through to managing the company was keen to maintain it in its current form," Ms Reynolds said. Bravo.

### Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	Dollar	Spot	1 month	3 month	D-Mark
UK	10000	28000	28000	0.624	0.633	0.632	0.630	
Australia	28000	28000	28000	1.583	1.587	1.585	1.583	
Canada	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	
France	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	
Germany	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	
Italy	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	
Japan	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	
Netherlands	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	
Sweden	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	
Switzerland	28000	28000	28000	0.615	0.615	0.615	0.615	

### Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Dollar	Country	Spot	Dollar
Argentina	16329	10000	Iran	0.0898	0.0898
Brazil	12946	10000	Pakistan	72.000	33870
Canada	0.615	10000	Poland	4.300	10000
France	0.615	10000	Romania	5.300	34258
Germany	0.615	10000	Saudi Arabia	5.9448	34405
Italy	0.615	10000	South Korea	100.00	10000
Japan	0.615	10000	Thailand	54.947	33650
Netherlands	0.615	10000	Turkey	0.0000	0.0000
Sweden	0.615	10000	USA	0.615	10000
Switzerland	0.615	10000			

### Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	7.25%	Germany	2.50%	US	5.50%
France	4.50%	Japan	0.50%	Canada	5.00%
Italy	5.00%	Sweden	4.00%	Switzerland	2.00%
Netherlands	4.00%	Denmark	4.00%	Belgium	2.75%
Spain	4.00%	Portugal	4.00%	Austria	3.50%
Greece	4.00%	Finland	4.00%	Ireland	4.00%
Poland	4.00%	Czech Rep	4.00%	Slovakia	4.00%
Hungary	4.00%	Slovenia	4.00%	Croatia	4.00%
Bulgaria	4.00%	Romania	4.00%	Bosnia	4.00%
Serbia	4.00%	Montenegro	4.00%	Albania	4.00%
Moldova	4.00%	Ukraine	4.00%	Belarus	4.00%
Latvia	4.00%	Lithuania	4.00%	Malta	4.00%
Cyprus	4.00%	Malta	4.00%	San Marino	4.00%
Monaco	4.00%	Andorra	4.00%	Vatican	4.00%

### Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	7.25%	Germany	2.50%	US	5.50%
France	4.50%	Japan	0.50%	Canada	5.00%
Italy	5.00%	Sweden	4.00%	Switzerland	2.00%
Netherlands	4.00%	Denmark	4.00%	Belgium	2.75%
Spain	4.00%	Portugal	4.00%	Austria	3.50%
Greece	4.00%	Finland	4.00%	Ireland	4.00%
Poland	4.00%	Czech Rep	4.00%	Slovakia	4.00%
Hungary	4.00%	Slovenia	4.00%	Croatia	4.00%
Bulgaria	4.00%	Romania	4.00%	Bosnia	4.00%
Serbia	4.00%	Montenegro	4.00%	Albania	4.00%
Moldova	4.00%	Ukraine	4.00%	Belarus	4.00%
Latvia	4.00%	Lithuania	4.00%	Malta	4.00%
Cyprus	4.00%	Malta	4.00%	San Marino	4.00%
Monaco	4.00%	Andorra	4.00%	Vatican	4.00%

### Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put
1000	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
1100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
1200	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
1300	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
1400	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Energy

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Precious Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Agricultural

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Other Softs

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short GR	Aug-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Latest Unit Trust Prices

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# Golding looks ready to emerge from the pack

THERE is a new pecking order in British sprinting – but no one yet knows what it is. Julian Golding, 23 years old, bright-eyed, bushy tailed and hugely talented, offers a graphic demonstration.

"It used to be Linford Christie here," he said, plonking his drink can under the table, and "everyone else here," laying down his mobile phone a foot or so behind.

"But now Linford has gone," he said, removing the drink can, "and we are all in a group together." His hand taps out a random pattern around his phone. "We've got me here, and Jason Gardener here, and Ian Mackie and Darren Campbell and Dwain Chambers and Darren Braithwaite and Christian Malcolm and Marlon Devonish."

"There's a sense of relief that Linford has retired, because whenever he was around you knew you were racing for second place. But it seems to have got even more competitive now."

Domestically, the race is on to earn individual sprint places for this season's European Championships and Commonwealth Games.

Mike Rowbottom meets a sprinter facing a season of major championship targets

While the most dramatic step forward last season came from Chambers, with his world junior 100 metres record of 10.06sec, the way Golding transformed spindly potential to splendid achievement has been just as impressive.

Perhaps the best testament to his ability came at last year's World Championships, when he anchored the relay team to a bronze medal.

This year Golding has built on his achievements of last summer – he also won the European Under-23 200m title – with an outstanding indoor season which left him third in the 1998 world 200m rankings with a time of 20.46sec. But he is not yet the finished article, as he showed in faltering to fourth place in the European Indoor Championships two months ago.

"That was a bitter disappointment to me," he said. "I felt crushed." But it has had the effect of motivating him to train harder than ever before under the direction of his new

coach, Mike McFarlane. He has high hopes for an outdoor season which gets underway at a meeting in Crete this weekend. "If I stay healthy, I think I can have a fantastic season and I don't use that word loosely. I am more confident than I have ever been in my life."

That is probably saying something. There is an assurance about this young man which is special and which stems, almost certainly, from a sense of proportion. His love of athletics is obvious. Like the reigning world 200m champion Ato Boldon, he is an avid student of the sport, replete with statistics. But for all the knowledge, and the eager personal ambition – he aims to be the first European to break 10 seconds for the 100m and 20 seconds for the 200, something neither Christie nor John Regis quite managed – Golding rates athletics at no higher than third on his list of priorities.

First comes the church – specifically the Church of God of Prophecy in Cricklewood,

where this eldest of five children worships regularly with his family. "God is my life," he said. "And music – that is my love."

Self-taught on the battered, irredeemably out-of-tune piano his father bought for him when he was 11, Golding also plays bass, drums and euphonium for the group which regularly provides gospel music in services.

He recently turned down a request from London Tonight to bring their camera to one of his performances. "It would have been wrong and over the top," he said. He is equally cautious about his own musical attachments. Many friends from his church, or other branches of it, are session musicians who play with bands such as M People, Eternal and All Saints, yet he refuses to contemplate travelling the same route.

"I would do it if I was going to be paid for playing gospel music, but otherwise no," he said. "If the opportunity came along to play for All Saints, I would turn it down. I enjoy playing on my Sunday mornings."

Golding has also told McFarlane never to ask him to train on a Sunday, because he would



Julian Golding: 'I am more confident than I have ever been in my life'

Photograph: Robert Hallam

not have time to go to church. Affable he may be, but there is a core of certainty in him.

If and when he does hit the big time, he will give some high-profile supporters cause for celebration – among them Joanna Lumley and Prince Charles.

For the last six years Golding has received grants from the Prince's Trust – the first, for £300, enabling him to buy a pair of spikes and some kit – and he has been drawn into a closer involvement with the organisation which culminated last October

when he gave a presentation to assembled showbusiness characters.

"I was shaking like a leaf beforehand, but people said I had done very well afterwards," he said. "Joanna Lumley told me she had watched me at the

World Championships and said that when she saw me again on television she would be screaming the set down."

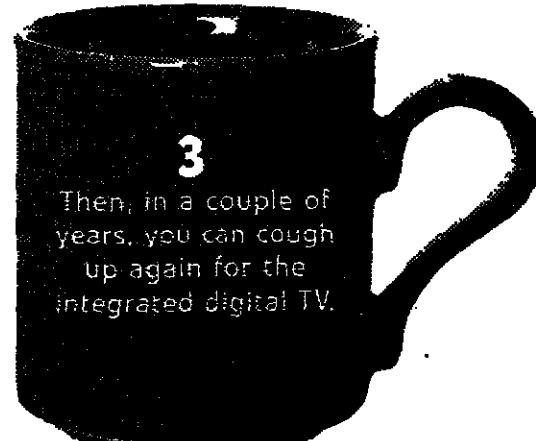
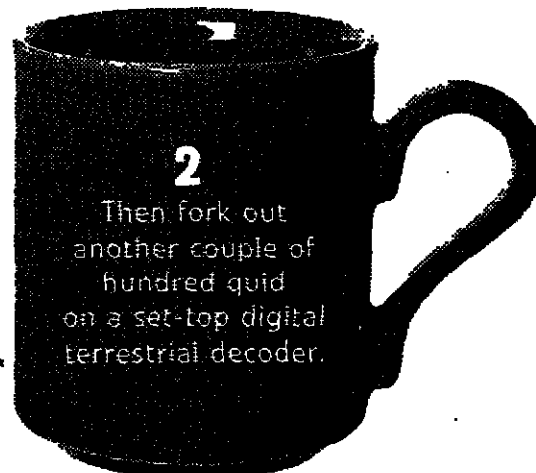
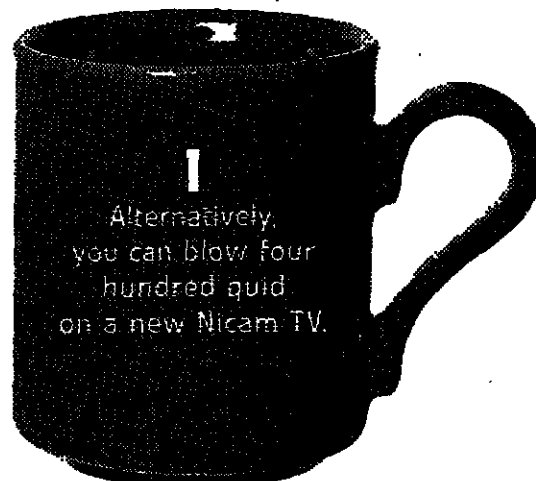
If things go according to plan for Golding, there really could be something to shout about this summer.

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## Street life suits Coulthard in race of the residents

### Motor racing

By Derrick Allison  
in Monte Carlo

THIS, David Coulthard contends, is his scene. Not as one of the posers, you understand, but as a racing driver intent on hauling himself back on to the heels of Mika Hakkinen in the world drivers' championship.

Coulthard and Hakkinen are among 10 Formula One drivers who live, nominally at least, in the principality. However, while Coulthard has made himself at home in the Monaco Grand Prix, Hakkinen has looked embarrassingly misplaced in the past, and Sunday's race is a potentially defining confrontation for both.

Hakkinen's best position here is the sixth he achieved in 1996, and that in freak circumstances, when he failed to finish.

Coulthard was second that day and has consistently been quicker than the Finn in the face of the unique challenge presented by this street circuit.

Coulthard, trailing by seven points, after Hakkinen's victory in Spain said: "This is one of my best circuits and so I believe I have a great opportunity on Sunday. Spain went his way but I have maintained all along there will be races where he goes well and races where I go well."

"This track is one of the great challenges in Formula One and I feel it brings the best out of me. Mika has had his problems here in the past and it is the kind of circuit where you cannot afford any mistakes."

"I don't think living here has any real advantage when it comes to the race. You just feel that bit more comfortable and relaxed. But then there are a lot of us living here, including Mika."

Hakkinen admitted he was eager to put a stop to his calamitous sequence. "It has been a really bad race for me," he said. "I have some difficult years. I did win a race, in 1993, but it was not in Formula One. I'd rather not talk about the other years. It's nice to be in Monaco and sleep in my own bed. Then I can

just get on the scooter and go to the circuit. It makes life easier."

Hakkinen maintains, however, that driving a McLaren is not as easy as it looks. While most observers would welcome Michael Schumacher's intervention in the proceedings, Hakkinen said: "It is not the cruise it can seem. I am still fighting – I am fighting with myself and with the car. It is not always about fighting other drivers."

Many would argue it is about racing other drivers. Those seeking more variety will be encouraged by Schumacher's record here – three wins in the last four years. The German, who is third in the title chase, said: "I don't think it is right to say this is a key race. It is too early in the season to talk that way. But it would be useful to stay in contact."

Entertainment is no concern of Coulthard or Hakkinen, however. "I'm here to win," Coulthard said, "not to worry about the show." Hakkinen added: "I suppose the public would like to see more action but I am not looking for any change."

## Wright makes England's day

### Hockey

By Bill Colwill  
in Utrecht

LUCILLA WRIGHT, Olton's 18-year-old, was the toast of England in Utrecht yesterday on the opening day of the women's World Cup when she scored England's goal with a fierce shot from a 19th-minute penalty corner in a 1-0 win against India.

The corner award came after a penetrating run by Jane Sixsmith had been abruptly ended by Helen Soy, India's iron player in defence. Wright, who had "tapped" a couple of earlier chances "just let fly".

England, who started attractively, lost their way against a side who defended in depth. Indeed, they did not have another shot at goal in the first half.

India came forward more

after the interval, but with Jackie Empson playing well in defence and Karen Brown covering with confidence at the back, their chances were limited to a couple of penalty corners both of which England defended with a certain degree of luck.

England's failure to control the second half was admitted by their coach, Maggie Souyave, as disappointing. But she said: "We got a win and a good start. We have a lot to work on. Next game will be better."

Scotland opened the proceedings against the world and Olympic champions, Australia, in the Utrecht FC stadium on a temporary artificial grass pitch, losing 5-0. Only brave goalkeeping by Tracey Robb, and Sue Lawrie in the second half, and inept penalty corners by Australia saved a landslide.

Results, Digest, page 31

## Collins forced to make great sacrifice

### Sailing

By Stuart Alexander  
in La Rochelle

A RESIGNED George Collins dropped himself from his own Chessie Racing team yesterday and brings in Britain's Derek Clark as a strategist with local knowledge.

The Baltimore businessman who has privately funded Maryland's first Whitbread race entry will be on board at the start in La Rochelle and will rejoin it for the closing stages in the Solent. "I was looking forward to doing this leg, but there's too much at stake," he said.

For this 450-mile leg Dennis Conner will be alongside Paul Standbridge on Toshiba, bidding to emulate his British partner, who won the eighth leg from Annapolis, while Paul Cayard has granted crewman Marco Constant's wish to be on board EF Language for what may be a victory lap now that the overall points win is in the bag.

Constant badly broke his left wrist just before the finish of the leg from Fort Lauderdale to Baltimore, but was determined to be in at the end.

Collins is relying on skipper John Kostecki, as Chessie is just 10 points, and one place, behind Grant Dalton, who is fighting to keep Merit Cup third overall. Collins' commitment to winning has been far beyond being a self-indulgent owner, but even for him the disappointment was hard to hide. "It wasn't easy, but it was the right decision," said the 57-year-old Collins. "I would have had to take a bowman off and that could hurt us as we are battling up the coast."

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## Shooting struggles to survive in sporting no man's land

THIS week, for the first time since a rail accident took my lower right arm five years ago, I fired a shotgun. Before anyone grimaces at the thought, I must stress that this did not involve popping off at wildlife.

Arranged by Tom Wingham, a taxi driver from Kent who is currently the Greater London skeet shooting champion, it brought me into contact with folk who resent bitterly the notion that their well-ordered sport has no place in a civilised society.

Nobody was entitled to dismiss the total ban on handguns that resulted from the horror of Dunblane as a knee-jerk reaction which intrudes upon civil liberty. The chilling death of those children and oth-

ers recently in the United States make a powerful case against the possession of firearms.

There is no point in the argument that British shooters have distinguished themselves in Olympic competition (Malcolm Cooper's gold medal at the Seoul Games of 1988 received a great deal of attention in newspapers and across the airwaves). But calls for further controls are in ignorance of definition.

Johnny Johnson is a past president of the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association and helps advise shooting's Parliamentary lobby. "We are talking about a sport that appeals to people from all walks of life," he said, after observing my efforts at the West Kent

Shooting School where Michael Lynch is a most patient instructor.

The son of a Durham collier, and retired from the Metropolitan Police with the rank of detective sergeant, Johnson has heard nothing to suggest that the Home Office plans other restrictions, but points out that it does not take an Act of Parliament to bring about conditional changes. "Dunblane was so dreadful that to play it down would be utterly irresponsible," Johnson added. "There was a lot of understandable emotion involved, but why should I have to suffer David Mellor's statement that anyone who shoots is a pervert?"

I'm telling you all this with the blank air of a reporter, intending no



KEN JONES

insult to people who would think it a measure of Government competence if permission to shoot was struck from the statute book.

Nevertheless, I find it difficult to accept that a sport conducted under strict supervision and with an ad-

mirable code of conduct should be at risk from manipulated public perception. "We're not ruffians," Johnson added.

But neither is the CPSA unaware that shooting may convey a "Rambo" image. A new code of dress introduced last January forbids the wearing of military fatigues and camouflage wear and "kill" no longer figures in the sport's vocabulary.

Mark Vessey, a BT telephone engineer from Kent who is taking part this week in the British Open championship at Blandford, wonders where the opposition to shooting will stop. Now 31, he began competing as a 16-year-old. "There are no safer shooters than clay shooters," he said.

Two months ago, Vessey joined in the vast Countryside March, staged as a protest against the inroads being made into rural life. "I have put a lot into shooting. Competition and practice take up a lot of my time and there isn't a great deal of sponsorship," he added. "Apart from golf, I have no interest in other sports, and can't be bothered to watch football, so I was disappointed when shooting came under threat. Of course, you can't minimise what happened at Dunblane and earlier at Hungerford, but the people who did those terrible things were certifiable."

Mixing with shooters at Pad-dock Wood last week, I was again aware of their comradeship. John-

son said: "You help each other - a bit of advice here, a bit there. And, of course, safety is paramount."

Johnson gets the impression - "from small signs" - that some MPs who voted for last year's Firearms Bill are beginning to have second thoughts. "But it's done now and we've got to get on with the job of securing the sport's future," he said. "Shooting well at your own level brings a sense of accomplishment. You shoot, have a cup of tea, perhaps a pint on the way home, and lock your gun away until the next time."

A dangerous obsession? Hardly. As Johnson says, he would sooner sleep with a woman than a firearm.

## Now Hollioake has to cope with pressure factor

### Cricket

By Derek Pringle

NO SOONER have England appointed a new captain than the spotlight of doubt falls on another. Two captains were always a good idea while England's one-day side was undergoing change.

But change is a fast moving force in limited-overs cricket and, with the shape of the team metamorphosing almost as quickly, Adam Hollioake finds his position under pressure.

Whether he accepts it or not, and Hollioake rarely accepts the current orthodoxy, he is a leader whose trial begins today, against South Africa in the first Texaco Trophy one-day international at his home ground of The Oval.

His opponents are formidable. With 18 wins from 22 games over the past year, South Africa are currently the best one-day side in the world, and the three-match examination facing Hollioake - whose tally after a poor showing in the West Indies now reads won 5, lost 4 - is likely to prove the most rigorous of his captaincy career.

"When I go home at night, I don't feel as if I'm on trial," said Hollioake after yesterday's practice. "Yet everyone tells me I am. So I suppose I am."

"I don't think anyone expected me to be the finished article at 26. One of the reasons I was made captain in the build-up to the World Cup is that it would be a learning process. If I don't learn from what happened in the West Indies, I'm wasting everyone's time."

He could be slightly indisposed even before a ball is bowled, should Graham Thorpe, England's most consistent one-day batsman, fall a

fitness test on a back spasm this morning.

It is not the first time that Thorpe - who suffered the spasm on Sunday during a routine fielding drill - has been afflicted, and he suffered something similar during the Barbados Test. Although that appeared to clear up, he returned home early to rest the complaint, which, according to England's physiotherapist, Wayne Morton, is a problem that probably stems from a displaced facet joint in the player's lower back.

Nasser Hussain, a player David Graveney said was close to selection last weekend, is standing by and will almost certainly play should Thorpe fail to recover in time.

Hussain has never made a secret over his annoyance at being overlooked for one-day cricket. A fine fielder and an adaptable batsman, his tally of just 12 appearances has non-plussed many. "I'm not exactly angry at missing out," he said after his call-up. "When England play the pinch-hitting option the whole country is bawling for just two or three places. It's a hard team to break into."

"I know they haven't finalised the World Cup squad and that it's open to anyone. If I get my chance hopefully I'll grab it. I've never played against South Africa before. So it will be nice to see their bowlers, whether it's watching Thorpe bat, or actually being there myself."

The theory behind Hussain's probable inclusion, despite the disparity in the pair's batting averages - Thorpe 40, Hussain 19.3 - is that he will replace like with like: a man to manoeuvre the ball when the field is spread, after the pinch-hitters like Nick Knight and Chris Adams have

inflicted some damage in the first 15 overs.

Trying to curtail the pyrotechnics of South Africa's pinch-hitter, Lance Klusener, will be the job of the returning new-ball pair of Darren Gough and Chris Lewis. Hamstrung by a lack of choice in what was a bevy of medium-pacers in the West Indies, Hollioake feels that he is better equipped to make things happen in the field.

Apart from the beige pitch, a surface South Africa's captain, Hansie Cronje, yesterday described as "awesome," The Oval is a large ground and England may be tempted to add further to their variety of bowlers by playing both specialist spinners. If they do, Matthew Fleming could be the unlucky man to miss out, though Thorpe's injury will postpone the final selection until this morning.

The slow drip pressure of speculation has conspired to downgrade many a career. Hollioake, a man who appears to thrive on pressure, is adamant that he is not one of those who will be affected.

"Pressure is something you put on yourself. I don't feel any at the moment. In fact, the moment my game feels good and I'm confident of my captaincy. Why should I think negatively?"

Why indeed? ENGLAND (probable): V Wright, A J Stewart, G J Adams, D L Moody, N Hogg, A J Hollioake (capt), M A Graham, C G Lewis, D Gough, R D Drift, A F Giles. SOUTH AFRICA (probable): G Kirsten, G F J Liebenberg, L Klusener, J H Kallis, D Cullum, W J Cronje (capt), J N Rhodes, S M Pollock, M V Boucher (wk), P L Symcox, A A Donald.

● Yorkshire expect to have around 2,000 tickets available on the day of the match for the third Texaco Trophy one-day international between England and South Africa at Headingley on Sunday.



The England selector Mike Gatting watches Chris Lewis warm up at The Oval yesterday Photograph: Robert Hallam

## Edwards charged with assault

### Rugby League

By Dave Hadfield

THE FORMER Great Britain captain, Shaun Edwards, and his Bradford Bulls team-mate, Tahiri Reihana, have been charged with assault following an incident outside a pizza parlour.

The pair will appear before Bradford Magistrates on 15 June. New Zealander Reihana was charged last week, whilst Edwards went voluntarily to Odsal police station on Tuesday night.

The Bradford chairman, Chris Caisley, said that the club were holding their own investigation into the incident.

The Salford coach, Andy Gregory, has said he considered resigning because of the latest refereeing controversy in which he finds himself embroiled.

Gregory has been called into the Rugby League on a date still to be fixed to discuss allegedly abusive remarks aimed at the referee, Steve Ganson, during the game against Sheffield Eagles last Sunday.

The former Great Britain scrum-half said that he had decided to stand down, but had been persuaded to stay on by his coaching staff at The Willows. Gregory has been in trouble before over comments directed at referees.

Eric Hughes, the coach St Helens sacked in January 1996, has returned to the club as operations manager. Hughes, who departed amid some acrimony and was later sacked after a season in charge at Wigan, will have special responsibility for developing young talent, an area in which he is highly regarded.

Shaun McKee, who succeeded him as coach, is contracted until the end of this season and Saints are due to talk to him about the possibility of an extension in July.

The London Broncos have insisted they are serious about signing the rugby union players, Zinzan Brooke and Kyran Bracken, to bolster their slow-starting Super League campaign.

Brooke is on the books of the Broncos' landlords, Harlequins, but has yet to play for them, while Bracken, the Saracens and England scrum-half, will undergo shoulder surgery on Monday.

### TODAY'S NUMBER

175

The number of entrants for the British Women's Amateur Golf Championship at Little Aston next month. The target of a place in the British and Ireland team to defend the Curtis Cup in America in August has helped attract this year's record entry.

## Slater finding his feet again after broken hand

By Myles Hodgson

ENGLAND have denied the cricket public of Horsham the opportunity of witnessing Chris Adams' bitter reunion with Derbyshire today, but the Sussex spectators will instead see a player equally determined to make his mark on this week's Championship encounter.

Adams, the Sussex captain, misses a potentially explosive confrontation with his former county, which he left during the winter following the controversial departure of captain Dean Jones' last season, because of his call-up into England's Texaco Trophy squad.

But while Adams' desire to overcome Derbyshire is motivated by the recriminations and arguments which marked his final season, Michael Slater is equally determined to make his mark.

Brought in as Derbyshire's overseas player following Saeed Anwar's withdrawal with international commitments, the Australian opener suffered a miserable start to his county career by breaking a bone in his left hand during the opening Championship match of the season against Nottinghamshire a month ago.

But a superb 68 from 81 deliveries against Leicestershire in yesterday's AXA victory in only his second innings back has underlined Slater's desire to enjoy a prolific season and cement his place at the top of Australia's order for this winter's Ashes series.

The Championship leaders, Surrey, will have their credentials tested by England withdrawals, which have deprived them of Adam Hollioake, Alec Stewart and Graham Thorpe for their trip to Somerset while third-placed Yorkshire must tackle

Gloucestershire without their main spearhead, Darren Gough.

Graeme Hick, overlooked for the Texaco series, will be trying to prove a point for Worcestershire against Middlesex at Uxbridge with the Worcestershire coach, Bill Athey, wanting a big improvement after their 103-run AXA defeat by Sussex on Tuesday.

Warwickshire, who moved into fourth place with an innings victory over Derbyshire last week, welcome back their captain, Brian Lara, after he missed their friendly against Oxford University to attend a meeting for international captains at Lord's.

His return against Nottinghamshire will strengthen a Warwickshire line-up deprived of Ashley Giles and Nick Knight, who are on England duty, and Tim Munton, who is still not fit to play his first Championship match of the season.

### Scoreboard

#### First-class matches

First day of three

Cambridge University v Durham

REMAINS: Durham 1st Cambridge University 1st

OVERS: 1st innings 270 for 3 (M A)

Gough 125, S Hutton 100.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY - First innings 110

(8 J E Brown 67).

DURHAM - Second innings 198 for 1 (1st day)

overnight total (J E Brown 100).

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY - Second innings

(J P Dwyer 100, J Phillips 100).

S J W Lewis 100, J Phillips 100.

Q R Hughes 100, Gough 100.

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# Durkin marks England's card for the finals

## Football

By Clive White

THERE was not a tackle from behind to be seen and the banters hardly qualified as dissent, but then this was not a World Cup semi-final; it was just a training camp down by the river at Bisham. And instructive though it has been to have the FIFA referee Paul Durkin on hand this week, giving them the do's and don'ts, the England coach, Glenn

Hoddle, remains concerned that the forthcoming French finals could develop into a farce.

It seems that the ambition that England have to reach the final is shared not only by the 31 other finalists but also the 34 dozen referees, among them Durkin, who are ready to carry out the world football authorities' instructions to the letter in order that they, too, will be present at the tournament's climax on 12 July.

It will almost certainly result

in a welter of red and yellow cards, which could mean that the competition is not necessarily won by the best team in the world but almost certainly the best behaved. Contrary to popular belief, it could spell good news for England, a regular recipient of Fair Play awards over the years. Hoddle's fears, however, were not easily allayed.

"The problem is that the referees have been told they've got one game each," he said. "They haven't been told that the

best or most experienced ones will go all the way. It's a pressure they don't need to be under. We might end up with eight versus eight, which I don't think anyone wants to see - it's ridiculous."

Durkin, who is likely to go further in the competition the less England progress, agreed it was a major consideration. "My continuation in the tournament is going to depend on that one performance," he said. "So, perhaps, a little bit of self-preservation will come into it

with regards to 'was it a yellow or red card offence'."

In the course of Tuesday's mild mannered training match, Durkin, who is attending the sessions at Hoddle's behest, had cause to warn only Gareth Southgate and Gary Neville for a couple of challenges, but a more meaningful competitive match is planned for today in the build-up to Saturday's friendly against Saudi Arabia. In the meantime, Durkin is hoping to talk the players through FIFA's

video on "the tackle from behind", which will be as good as outlawed as of next month.

Since it will be an automatic red card if the tackle "endangers the safety of an opponent", no one in their right mind is likely to attempt it. A prime example in the video of what was no longer allowed was a tackle whereby the ball was taken cleanly off an opponent with an outstretched foot between his legs but with the tackler's trailing leg he took the opponent down.

There will be a general crackdown on rough play, too. Durkin admitted that the yellow card he showed England's captain, Alan Shearer, for a foul on Tony Adams in last Saturday's FA Cup final would probably be red in the World Cup. "Players have got to realise that their judgement must be spot-on," Durkin said. "They can no longer hide behind the excuse, 'yes, but he played the ball first'."

David Beckham is one of

those players who could be at risk, but he said he thought he had learned from his mistakes of last summer at Le Tanneur when suspension cost him an appearance against Brazil. "I don't think those two bookings were justified but the boss has made me realise you get bookings you don't agree with in World Cups," he said.

Norman "Bite yer legs" Hunter, for one, must be relieved he played his football when he did.

## Waddle supports Gazza

CHRIS WADDLE yesterday added his voice to the argument in favour of Paul Gascoigne going to France this summer.

"If he stays fit I think he is still our best creative player," Waddle said. "The main thing is that we don't have anybody who can control the game pace-wise. He can make the game go slow or quick."

"When he is not playing I think we look one-paced. We've got a lot of talent, but the man who dictates the play is hard to find. It's an art in itself. It might look like he has got time but that's the sign of a great player. He is definitely our best player for doing that. He is at his best when he is let off the leash and has no worries."

Glenn Hoddle has issued a final warning to Gascoigne over his drinking and dietary habits, but Waddle claims the England coach is fully aware of Gascoigne's importance.

"Glenn knows that Paul can dictate a game of football for him," Waddle said. "These players are hard to find. Glenn knows he's just coming up to 31 and this may be his last World Cup. He is still in his prime and is still in good condition. People will say he's had his best days but time will tell on that."

"I still think he is very capable of doing very well in France and Glenn knows that as well. He has obviously got to put laws down and make the lad think."

"He is putting statements and advice out to Gazza to make

sure he goes to France giving himself the best possible chance of being as fit as he can be and hopefully being one of the best players in the World Cup."

"I would never back against Paul Gascoigne being the star of the tournament. He can't win it on his own. So let's hope everybody gets off his back and I'm sure we'll get the best out of Gazza in France."

Waddle also defended Gascoigne over criticism of his lifestyle. "What people don't realise is that he's a fit guy naturally. He might look like he has put a little weight on but he gets rid of it. He watches what he eats - he's not a big eater."

"OK, he had a few beers last week but nothing that anybody hasn't had in the past. He works hard. I was with him for a couple of days last week and he was looking after himself. He wouldn't eat this and wouldn't eat that. But he had a kebab and everybody said what sort of preparation is this? It was quite far-fetched. If it was another player it wouldn't be a problem."

"You're not telling me the Arsenal players didn't have a drink after the Cup final. All players go out and have a drink when they're on holiday. They've finished the season and it's been hard for many of them. But it's not about the week they get off, it's about now and onwards. I'm sure Gazza will be working very hard for the tournament."

Hard road for Scotland, page 31



Petr Korda returns a backhand on the way to defeating his American opponent Michael Chang in the World Team Cup in Düsseldorf yesterday

Photograph: AFP

## Korda finally catches up with speedy Chang

PETR KORDA won a two-hour battle against Michael Chang 7-6, 3-6, 6-3 to steer the Czech Republic to victory over the United States in the World Team Cup clay-court event in Düsseldorf yesterday.

The world No 2, hoping to make another challenge to Pete

Sampras's No 1 position at next week's French Open, produced his second impressive performance of the week following his thrashing of the world No 7, Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman, in straight sets on Monday. Korda's win gave the Czechs an unbeatable 2-0 lead.

In the second Red Group match, Australia beat Sweden 2-1 and will now face the Czechs today to determine who plays in Sunday's final against the winner of the Blue Group. Eight nations have been taking part. Korda, the Australian Open champion, needed two hours

and 27 minutes to defeat Chang, the 1989 French Open champion, who he said was "as fast as Speedy Gonzales". Slava Dosedel thrashed Jim Courier 6-3, 6-1 in the first singles. The American, another former French Open champion, lost for the second time this week.

The tie between Australia and Sweden was decided by Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde's 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 win over Bjorkman and Mikael Tillstrom after the singles matches had been split. Australia's Mark Philippoussis hit four aces in one

game during his 6-3, 6-4 win over Bjorkman. Sweden's Magnus Norman then captured the second singles by sweeping past Woodforde 6-2, 6-3. Germany, the defending champions, Spain, Slovakia and France are in the Blue Group. Results, Digest, page 31

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3616, Thursday 21 May By Sparrow Wednesday's solution

ACROSS

7 Night flier's witicism hard to follow (4)

8 Sort of pink light at one end of church? (4, 6)

10 Pity about getting into a state - it's not normal (8)

11 Dust round Duke's office (6)

12 Press Association investigator's taken about a year to assemble old papers (6)

13 Where they're said to be loaded or rolling? (2, 6)

15 Psychiatrist reprimanded, we hear, for appearing in film? (6-7)

18 Various roads linked with East Street will be busy (8)

20 Roofing material which is associated with Switzerland (6)

22 Military Intelligence concealing initial mistake in paper (6)

24 Tell one's closest friend (8)

25 Having deserted, is arranged and dismissed from the service (10)

26 Who'd found shipwrecked vessel? (4)

DOWN

1 Scot adrift in US city exploits Oxford connections (4, 6)

2 Fast food outlet established by carpenter (6)

3 Part of unit - French - joining battle (8)

4 Stolen tissue concealed by son and daughter (6)

5 Bloomer involving cocaine delivery? (8)

6 Put up with trying situation (4)

9 Partnership's score increased by 25%? (6, 7)

14 Journalist looking up speech in which there's a tribute to patron (10)

15 One of the overheard borne by the motorist on holiday? (4-4)

17 Air one's opinion (8)

19 Article not fully understood? Here's the line of reasoning (6)

21 Craft of which former England bowler showed complete mastery? (6)

23 Dark blue flower one's found on island (4)

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## Woosnam's Ryder desire

### Golf

By Andy Farrell at Wentworth

THE pass the parcel game, otherwise known as who wants to be Europe's next Ryder Cup captain, could end with Ian Woosnam.

The 40-year-old Welshman yesterday became the first to declare his interest in leading the team to face the Americans in Boston next year. "I'd take the job any time from now to the future," Woosnam said yesterday.

It also emerged that any appointment will be on a one-off basis, so ending the practice of long-term campaigns by Tony Jacklin and Bernard Gallacher.

The Ryder Cup Committee feels there are a number of experienced players who can handle the captaincy and that the honour should be passed around.

The only problem has been getting anyone to commit to captaining the side at the expense of playing in the match. No one has emerged to undertake the hard act of following Seve Ballesteros, who resigned the post after his triumph in Spain last year.

The appointment has already been delayed for an unusually long period of time, but the committee have said a captain will be named before the qualifying starts in September.

Sam Torrance and Mark James, neither of whom played

Leila

Leila 4 months later

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## The hole in one that won a Lamborghini

A NATIONAL newspaper golf correspondent was considering whether to turn professional last night in order to be able to accept the prize of a £189,000 Lamborghini. Derek Lawrenson won the car for holing in one in a charity golf day featuring the England World Cup football squad at Mill Ride, Ascot.

Lawrenson, who works for the *Sunday Telegraph*, is a left-hander with a handicap of eight. A Liverpool supporter who became a father five weeks ago, he achieved the feat in the company of Paul Ince and Steve McManaman. "Now I have to decide whether to turn down the prize or turn professional," he said.

As soon as an amateur shows any intention to accept a prize worth more than the strict limit of £200 he is deemed to be a professional. Professionals, who are not allowed to compete in amateur events,

can be reinstated if they fail to make the grade as a pro and return to playing purely social golf.

However, in a case like Lawrenson's, a request to regain his amateur status may not be looked upon favourably. As one senior Professional Golfers' Association official said last night: "He could only send in his letter requesting his reinstatement as an amateur with his death certificate."

## ... and the one that went in off a Toyota

IT WAS just a normal day for Nancy Bachand. Trundling along a Massachusetts highway at a steady 30mph when her Toyota she was minding her own business until Todd Obuchowski entered her life, or rather his golf ball did.

Obuchowski, a 34-year-old sheet metal worker, was enjoying a round at Haydeville's Beaver Brook course when he hit a wayward tee shot at the 116-yard, par-three fourth hole.

The ball shot over the green and on to the road where it ricocheted off the passenger side of the Bachand's car and rolled in the cup for a hole in one.

هكذا من اللاصل